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# PRIMITIVE TRADE

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## PREFACE

The thesis set forth in the following pages was first developed under the title "Foundations of Economic Value." It might have been related with almost equal pertinence, however, to anthropology, psychology, sociology or economic history, and the present title more fully indicates its field.

The author expresses her gratitude to those members of the Faculty of Harvard University and Radcliffe College who generously assisted her in the development of her thought, even when, in some instances, it ran counter to their own: to Professor A. M. Tozzer in anthropology, Professor R. B. Perry in philosophy, and Professor A. P. Usher in economic history. Less directly, but even more fundamentally, however, she is indebted to the stimulating and sustaining influence of her three teachers in economic theory, Professors T. N. Carver, F. W. Taussig and A. A. Young.



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# PART I

## INTRODUCTION

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# PRIMITIVE TRADE

## CHAPTER I

### GENETIC ECONOMIC PSYCHOLOGY

#### PROBLEM AND MATERIALS

##### *Problem*

ECONOMICS as a science stands midway between immediate practical problems and those broader but not less practical problems by which in the long run general policies must be determined. It looks in two directions: on the one hand, towards the machinery of producing, distributing and consuming goods; on the other hand, towards the power by which the machinery is run. For the most part, and no doubt rightly, it has as yet chiefly concerned itself with the machinery alone, for the tremendous commercial and industrial expansion of the last hundred years or more has concentrated attention on the actually existent market. The problems of the market had to be solved at once, with or without the help of economics. The need of a philosophy of the market has been by no means so obvious.

Economists have been able to respond to the need for practical direction by showing that, granting certain as-

sumptions about human nature, certain results follow particular policies in the market. These psychological assumptions, in the first instance, were taken over from the current philosophy and psychology of the early nineteenth century. Later economists came to modify certain of the earlier theories, interest theory for example, in the light of newer concepts in psychology. They have had, however, scant time to undertake on their own account an investigation of the validity of the assumptions they have made.

Of late, as is well known, considerable criticism has been levelled against economists on the ground that these conditions which they first assumed have never been sufficiently corrected. It is admitted that the economists' restatement of theory in the light of the newer psychology is interesting, but it does not go far enough; they fail, in short, to take psychology as seriously as it deserves. More particularly—and this is a significant point—a certain group of critics are convinced that the admission of the new truths that psychology has to offer involves an abandonment of the old conviction of the economist that competition is in the long run the best method of attaining economic development. The critics observe that some of the economists themselves appear to fear this, since they admit the newer psychology with a certain air of concession, and put their emphasis on those aspects through which it may yet turn out a bulwark of defence.

The heart of economics, in both its narrower and its broader aspects, is the theory of value. It is through this that the connection between man and goods is made,

Indeed, the development of value and all that it implies from earliest times to the present is, from another point of view, the development of civilization. Our interest centres, however, not on the development of value as history but on its foundations as a problem in psychology.

The beginning of value is an interest in goods ; its culmination is a perfect price for goods, by which the satisfaction of interests is most economically secured. How shall we analyze the concept of value to find the ideas and attitudes which must separately arise before we can have this perfect price? Clearly three psychical processes are necessary. A man must want goods ; he must be able to conceive these goods in terms of the valuations of other goods ; and he must be willing to negotiate with other persons for purposes of trade. These three processes we shall approach under the three heads of the Development of Interests, the Objectifying of Interests, and the Expansion of Trade. The last head involves not only the physical extension of trade relations among different groups and the psychology connected therewith, but also the growth of mutual confidence in trade within a group.

To understand what the actual psychological development along these lines has been is our best preparation for an understanding of the psychology involved in them to-day.

### *Materials*

Wants, estimations of goods and services, and attitudes to other men are all matters of behaviour, and the study of human behaviour is obviously the broad field from which

economists have most to profit. Behaviour as a science is, of course, the province of psychology. On many of the important questions that concern the economist, however, psychology has not yet rendered a decisive opinion, and we must turn to some of the sources from which psychology gathers its original data: everyday life, anthropology and history. A study of the latter two is peculiarly valuable for the economic psychologist, who, in spite of himself, is likely to be predisposed in favour of certain existing theories as to economic conduct; it is always easier to give objective treatment to an ancient or distant people.

For our purposes history is clearly insufficient, since it does not go back far enough. Even in those parts of our problem, however, where it might seem we could get our data from history the historical method presents certain limitations. In the first place, history concerns itself with relatively few peoples: most of the peoples of Europe, some of those of Asia. Generalizations as to economic psychology drawn from these few might be totally false. The material is too limited. In the second place, the history that we have, and particularly the economic history, is for the most part of peoples who have come into considerable contact with others. It is the history very largely of those who have, so to speak, already swung into one particular line of development—a development which, under other circumstances, might have taken quite a different appearance. A thousand identical cases of one phenomenon among peoples who have been subjected to the same single influence furnishes no satisfactory basis for

theory to build upon. A thousand identical cases of one phenomenon among peoples subjected to a thousand different influences is worth something.

It is true that history deals with the peoples who have in fact evolved the commercial institutions with which we have to deal ; yet it is conceivable, and indeed very likely, that these same commercial institutions might have been developed also by many other routes.

By way of limiting the field of our study we shall confine our behaviour data as closely as possible to those of anthropology alone, for nearly all that is illustrated in history is illustrated here, and much besides. Our study makes no claim, however, to be a thorough investigation of all the aspects of primitive economic psychology. Its purpose is simply to use the materials of anthropology as the best available materials for a fuller understanding of economic value as it exists among ourselves.

*Difficulties in choice and use of materials.* We have already spoken of the incomplete progress made by psychology along the lines most interesting to the economist. The economist is further disturbed by a large measure of disagreement among different schools of psychologists. We have used the words "newer psychology" but the term is a very loose one, for there are several "newer" psychologies. The disagreement does not seem fatal to us, however, for an outsider can perceive and use essential contributions from all the schools ; but it does make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to use a psychological vocabulary which shall not do violence to one school or another.

The difficulties with our anthropological materials are of quite another nature. Some of the facts we are most anxious to have here have apparently never been set down. The rest are, for the most part, buried in a mass of material of a most heterogeneous sort. We have, of course, some records of ancient peoples left by classical writers. Our knowledge of the primitive folk of modern times is drawn from a vast number of volumes by explorers and travellers, some acute observers and some not; but all of these books require a careful searching in order to pick out the few particular passages that relate to the points on which one seeks light. Records of the traditional history and folklore of primitive societies are also in some cases elucidating. In addition we have a very few reliable scientific works, most of them produced during the last few years, which treat some subjects connected with primitive economics. We have also a far larger number of quasi-scientific books, written by persons who evidently acquired their theories in advance of a wide acquaintance with the source material of their subject. These works are difficult to appraise at first, for they are generally convincing on the surface. Anthropological science is young, and it is still possible to present evidence and get some support for almost any theory one likes. The introductory paragraph to the Hobhouse study of the Material Culture of the Simpler Peoples puts the case very well:

“Theories of social evolution are readily framed with the aid of some preconceived ideas and a few judiciously selected corroborative facts. The data offered to the theorist by the voluminous results of

anthropological inquiry on the one hand, and by the immense record of the history of civilization on the other, are so vast and so various that it must be an unskilled selector who is unable, by giving prominence to the instances which agree and by ignoring those which conflict with his views, to make out a plausible case in support of some general notion of human progress. On the other hand, if theories are easily made, they are also easily confuted by a less friendly use of the same data. That same variety of which we speak is so great that there is hardly any sociological generalization which does not stumble upon some awkward fact if one takes the trouble to find it. Anyone with a sense for facts soon recognizes that the course of social evolution is not unitary but that different races and different communities of the same race have, in fact, whether they started from the same point or no, diverged early, rapidly, and in many different directions at once. If theorising is easy when facts are treated arbitrarily, a theory which would really grow out of the facts themselves and express their true significance presents the greatest possible difficulties to the inquirer."<sup>1</sup>

If our undertaking were to create a sequence in standards of higher and lower cultures, as students of a previous generation sought to do—to draw lines between savage and barbarous, barbarous and semi-civilized man—or to arrange our societies to conform to the steps of some cherished philosophy of history, we might well be paralyzed by our task. A people which shows most marked development in one direction may be very backward in another, and in particular it seems difficult to draw lines of correlation between economic development and social or political organization. Our problem, however, is a simpler one.

<sup>1</sup> Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg, I.

In the first place, we do not have to relate our problem of value to social or other conditions prevailing in society. It will cause us no pain to discover little sense of relative values in otherwise well developed peoples, nor to find that the New Britishers, who wore no clothing whatever, had also what was perhaps the most highly evolved money economy of any primitive society.

In the second place, the development we are tracing is primarily a logical one, and requires no continuous temporal sequence of customs. We have distinguished three general sorts of implications in the notion of economic value as a perfect price: implications which are expressed first in the creation of wants, second in men's attitudes, subjective or objective, towards goods and services, and third in men's attitudes towards trading relations with others. These three features implied in value represent also a sort of temporal sequence in that there must be some sort of an interest in a thing before one takes the trouble to esteem it objectively; and that until goods and services are regarded to some extent objectively, trading relations will not attain any significance. To recognize, however, that the three implications in the development of value are not without a genetic relation to one another is not at all to affirm that interests must be largely aroused before objectification begins, nor that objectification must be considerable before we have trade. In fact the objectification of goods and services reacts on wants and increases them, while trade no doubt is itself the greatest single influence making for the objectification of goods and services, as



well as a significant factor in increasing men's interests. The logical sequence, in other words, is far from involving a consistent historical succession.

It may be said, however, that although we have avoided trouble in the choice of our three main categories, the course of development within each of them is attended with pitfalls. So far as we attempt to present such courses of development this is true; but psychology comes to our aid here by showing us that some human characters are more fundamental than others. This helps us at the beginning, and it is only at the beginning that we shall seek to establish a temporal sequence. A trait once started has its choice of various paths; or, better, circumstances thereafter determine its career. A given trait or institution can develop in any one of a number of ways.

We are not, in fact, interested in lines of development without basis in psychology: such economic stages, for instance, as hunting, grazing and agriculture have no real significance even when they fortuitously are true. Psychologists know that there cannot be a definite evolution for each social institution, and anthropologists know that there never has been such. We may speak of the evolution of a custom only when we remember that within each great evolution various small evolutions are proceeding simultaneously.

### *The Nature of Primitive Mentality*

Such a study as ours would have a certain historical interest whatever our theory as to the relation of the mentality of primitive to that of modern man. Its interest

is greater if the differences between them are fundamentally differences in culture and the character of their mentalities essentially alike.

The theory that the human intellect is a function the development of which is traceable historically, and that primitive men represent a lower stage of the evolution of that function than do we, is an outgrowth of the extreme reaction against special creation theories that characterized the evolutionism of the later nineteenth century. Certain voices among the evolutionists themselves were immediately raised against the necessity of such an interpretation, but the theory continued to be popular, for once the general concept of natural selection was granted it fitted most neatly into the evolutionary scheme.

There is, however, no physical evidence to support this view. No one race is closest to the apes. Some races resemble their pre-human ancestors more in some respects, others in others. Neither are any definite conclusions to be drawn from measurements of skulls. If some peoples have had a larger brain capacity or greater brain weight than others, this does not prove that their intellects were superior.

To be sure there are great differences in the intelligence of men, as this is revealed either by their respective abilities to adapt means to ends, or by so-called mental tests. The intelligence thus revealed is not necessarily native intelligence, however. A man's ability to work out an answer to a problem, even a problem of pure reason, depends very largely on his direct cultural ex-

perience and the indirect effects upon him of the cultural atmosphere in which he has been bred. The extraordinary capacities for development shown by certain "savages" when placed in a favourable economic and more particularly in a favourable social environment should make us extremely slow to trust, for instance, the results of tests that do not isolate the influence of the varied factors reacting on mental operations.

It is, of course, easily possible to find among primitives some groups whose mentalities are inferior. It is also possible to find such groups among ourselves. There is no way of showing that primitives of inferior mental capacity represent a stage through which others have passed. These inferior groups differ from one another in an extraordinary degree. There is no typical savage. At present it is as scientifically impossible to put the Andamanese Islanders, for instance, at the bottom of an assumed evolutionary series as it would be to put there such subnormal groups as the Jukes or Kallikaks in the United States.

At the present time there is a special pertinence in mentioning this subject, not only because of present widespread interest in the United States as to the general relation of race and intelligence, but also because of the recent appearance of several influential books which deal with the particular relation of primitive mentality to our own. In the two well-known books of Lévy-Bruhl<sup>1</sup> the author undoubtedly makes out a good case for the irra-

<sup>1</sup> *Les Fonctions Mentales dans les Sociétés Inférieures*, Paris, 1910; *Primitive Mentality*, Clare, Lilian A., Translator, New York, 1923.

tionality of primitive man ; and from this he concludes that primitive mentality is essentially different from our own. The one fact, however, by no means necessarily involves the other. To the cause and significance of this irrationality we shall refer again in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER II

### MAN'S EQUIPMENT FOR LEARNING

WE have spoken of three phases in the development of value: the acquisition of interests; the objectification of interests; and the extension of trading relations. None of these are in any comprehensive sense "natural" to man. It is indeed natural for him to want food and protection, but all his other wants are learned. The objectification of his interests is in large measure a matter of learning. He has no "natural disposition" to barter; he comes to trade by learning how to trade. The equipment by which the learning process is carried on is therefore of the greatest significance to us.

#### *An Analysis of Reason*

As is well known, it was formerly taken more or less for granted by economists and others that, so far as his conduct in the market was concerned, man was a rational being, calculating his advantage in advance and acting on his calculations. To this view was later opposed the fact that man is possessed by a variety of warring motives, which frequently lead him to conduct himself most irrationally,

even in the economic field ; that man is, to a large degree, the servant rather than the master of impulse. As has been shown elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> however, one is not necessarily obliged to enroll himself in one or the other of these two camps. Neither is complete.

A large part of the difficulty in disputes as to man's reason is resolved by an analysis of what the different contending parties mean when they speak of rationality. Our first task, then, is to analyse the concept of rationality so that at the outset we may know where we are. We shall treat rationality from the point of view of the individual making the decision, not from the point of view of an observer of his conduct, for since we are dealing with psychological equipment it is with the former only we are concerned ; "objective" rationality may in any given case be merely a matter of accident.

Rationality, then, may mean any one of three things. Complete rationality means all three of them. These three things are, first, a basis of information on which to act, or knowledge ; second, an ability to make use of this information, or sagacity ; third, a willingness to make use of it, or, consciously or unconsciously, a moral will.<sup>2</sup>

Our last proposition, that complete rationality involves a moral will, may at first perhaps be questioned. Yet it is clear that every decision, however trivial in itself, has ultimate bearings on something which affects whatever the aim of life is conceived to be ; and every trivial decision is

<sup>1</sup> Dickinson, *Economic Motives*, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> For another analysis of rationality, which involves these three elements somewhat differently arranged and named, see Bosanquet, Lecture IX.

ultimately to be questioned according to its conformity to this aim. The ordinary individual makes hundreds of decisions without thought of moral application, to one decision, perhaps, that he makes with such thought; but in order for an act to be moral or immoral it is not necessary for the actor to be consciously thinking of morality. This does not mean, of course, that in a given predicament only one course can possibly be right. In many cases the moral act, so far as we can see, may be any one of a large number of acts. The point is simply that no decision is devoid of moral significance. If I wish to kill my neighbour and accomplish that end by cunningly giving him poison, it does not matter how great is my knowledge of poison or my sagacity in administering it, my act will not be a rational one. In lesser matters where the act or decision lies in that vast region where ethics are doubtful or to be determined by circumstances, one withholds a moral judgment only because of one's ignorance of all the facts.

When the word "rational" has been rightly applied to man's economic conduct, however, it is in a more limited sense, in which the question of morality does not enter. Rationality here has meant conformity to a proximate end only. The man created by the economists was "rational" for economic purposes, not for the general purposes of life. Dickinson takes McDougall to task for claiming man's conduct is irrational when what McDougall means is only that men fail in moral will.<sup>1</sup> But if the critics of the classical economists have failed to enter completely into

<sup>1</sup> Dickinson, *Economic Motives*, 192-195.

the economists' viewpoint, the defenders of the economists have been at fault in failing to appreciate how their definition limits the ordinary meaning of the word. As the general term is used, it implies moral aspects which cannot be dismissed as a mere "special case" of reason.<sup>1</sup> The misunderstanding here is for the most part a difference in interpretation of words.

It is of course clear enough to all sides that no man's conduct, economic or other, is entirely rational in a moral sense. Into this aspect of reason, however, we shall not enter.

When we come to sagacity, the second element in rational conduct, we find ourselves facing what is largely an unknown quantity. That men, given the same data, differ very greatly in their abilities to perceive and discriminate, to put two and two together and grasp a situation or solve a problem, is clear enough when one stops to think of it, yet another large part of the trouble in disputes about reason is due to a glossing over of this fact. Truly rational conduct must be sagacious, but a man cannot be criticized for failing to exercise what he has not got. Here again the economists have fallen short in failing to make it clear to their opponents that they in fact do recognize men's differences in native capacity, and the opponents are at fault in adducing lack of sagacity as evidence in itself that man is an irrational being.

As economists, however, it is not our task to explain the moral will or the sagacity of men. These are problems at present beyond our sphere. We are chiefly concerned

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dickenson, *Economic Motives*, 193.



here with the third aspect of reason, the basis of information which man has to act upon, and the manner by which he acquires it.

It is clear that the informational basis of rationality does not spring full armed from the head of Jove. The man of yesterday, however rational he was, has no such basis for his activity as the man of to-day, and the man of to-day will be outstripped by his successor of to-morrow. Information varies both in nature and in amount with different groups of men; and the general increase in men's rationality in human history has been largely, it has even been claimed entirely, a matter of culture. The moral wills, the degrees of sagacity of different individuals, can act only within the limits prescribed by their society. The rationality of a period is determined immediately by efforts, intentions and abilities; ultimately by information, knowledge and experience.

The real crux of the practical problem of rationality thus does not lie in the moral will, nor in sagacity, for here there is general agreement to the extent, at least, that men differ greatly in these respects and all are far enough from perfection. In discussions of reason it will clarify matters to put these two aspects to one side. What we must ask rather, is by what means learning itself is acquired and what difficulties stand in the way of acquiring it.

### *Explanations of the Learning Process*

Various classifications may be made of explanations of the learning process. From one point of view these explanations may be divided into those which conceive

the impulses to learning to be an inherent part of man's nature or functionalistic, independent of physical or physiological environment so far as their inception is concerned; and those which refer all learning impulses to excitements aroused by physiological or physical stimuli. When such a classification is made a frequent point of view is some sort of a compromise between these two extreme positions.

From another point of view, explanations may be divided into pluralistic and monistic. In the former case the various impulses to action, however awakened, are all independent even though they may be inter-related. They may combine and serve one another in various ways, but they are essentially individual and discrete. The monistic view gives us one central impulse, the common element in all the differentiated impulses. These discrete impulses are thus different aspects of one thing, which is practically recognizable in experience.

For our purposes here the second method of classification seems most helpful, and since the monistic view, when properly understood, appears to us the true one, we shall make our explanations in terms of that. In the first place, however, we must clear up two prevailing misunderstandings regarding it. The first is that it is a metaphysical concept, the second that this one tendency cannot include all others, for some of men's impulses are contrary to the will to live, as the monistic impulse is perhaps most usually described.

This impulse has likewise been variously named a will to power, a will to experience, a life principle, a creative

impulse. It is akin to Bergson's creative evolution. It is the thymos of the Greeks. All men's impulses, tendencies, aptitudes, instincts, call them what we like, and the intellect itself, in fact, are but aspects of a fundamental will to live, either in the passive tendency of living beings to cling to the existence they have, or in their active tendency to enrich and enlarge that experience.

From our point of view it is unfortunate that many of the upholders of this view, and most of its opponents, have taken for granted that it implies certain metaphysical pre-suppositions. The view has, in fact, been made the centre of the wildest speculations and assumptions, and indeed such speculations may readily be connected with it. In particular it has been treated as a thing in itself rather than as an empirically observable process.

We are not interested in it, however, as a principle with metaphysical implications created to explain various differentiated behaviour characteristics. For us it is not a hypothetical interpretation of something else but a fact of experience itself. It is not a thing but a process. As such a process it is no more spiritualistic or metaphysical than it is mechanistic. It is an ordinary fact of observation, the most familiar and the most dominant of our experience. It is probable that its very familiarity, dominance and simplicity have caused its significance to be overlooked. We cannot, of course, explain it, but we can accept it by what it does. That is all we ask for it here.

To the second objection urged against it, that the life impulse cannot be the source of all impulses because

some impulses lead to the destruction of one's life, we must reply that psychologically one of the characteristics of impulses that advance life is that they are found to be pleasant. Eating and the gratification of the sexual appetite, to take the most obvious examples, are pleasant because they advance the purposes of life ; or those who do in fact find them pleasant are the ones who survive, if one wishes to put it this way. The pleasant, however, does not turn to the unpleasant so soon as it ceases to advance life. It does not act automatically : pleasure is a rough guide at best and the pleasant associations accompanying an act may remain after the act has ceased to be serviceable. They are often continued then for their own sakes. This excess, this too much of a good thing, under such circumstances turns out to be destructive. A man enjoys roast turkey and eats so much that he gets dyspepsia, but the impulse to eat is subservient to the life impulse for all that. It is true that the intellect, which, according to our view, is the latest creation of the life impulse, sometimes counsels self-destruction. To this we can say only that always, probably, a struggle for life follows the self-destructive act, and that the intellect which is on the one hand man's greatest aid to reason is on the other his greatest liability.

All desires, all wills, impulses and faculties, therefore, appear as expressions of the life impulse or of the misuse of it.

*The Will to Live and the Learning Process*

The conception of an expanding will to live appears to us greatly to elucidate an understanding of the learning process. By granting this will may be itself mechanistic we avoid the difficulty of attempting to explain conduct in terms of individual mechanical responses and yet can keep, as it seems to us, within the essential limits of behaviourism. There is nothing more mechanistic in many small responses than in one great one. At the same time we do not have to follow the instinct psychologists in their efforts to provide a classification of discrete drives in number and scope sufficient to include under them all that man does; as, according to McDougall, for instance, the instincts "directly or indirectly . . . are the source of all human activity."<sup>1</sup> To us, rather, the will to live is the source of all human activity, and the instincts—for it seems legitimate to us to call certain tendencies instincts, at least hunger and sex—are simply channels through which it acts. According to McDougall, the instincts furnish their own drive. The instinctive impulses themselves "supply the driving power by which all mental activities are sustained."<sup>2</sup> In our view, on the contrary, the will to live simply uses instincts through which to express itself, as it uses also habits and native aptitudes, and as, at a later stage, it uses the intellect.

In general a vigorous central drive means vigorous expression of the personality in all directions, though, of course, the channels to conduct this force may vary in

<sup>1</sup> McDougall, *Social Psychology*, 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

their depth or capacity in the same person, as native aptitudes in the same person differ also. A superior or inferior mechanism to conduct the drive is probably the explanation of this.

To ordinary observation, at any rate, the forces which drive a man do not appear so much to be specialized as they appear to be centralized and to go out looking, one might almost say, for channels through which to express themselves. To be sure, in modern civilized society a man soon learns that material or social recognition is to be bought by harnessing his forces to some one tendency or aptitude and keeping them there ; but in the conduct of primitive men and of children the case is quite different. Force overflows in all directions ; it is diffusive. Even in our own experience, however, how many times are we possessed with a tremendous desire for action and must wait, weigh and reflect before we determine through which channels we shall permit our will to find expression. I awake in the morning filled with a general disposition to accomplish something difficult. What shall I do to-day ? I ask. I spring from my bed, perform my toilet with vigour, eat my breakfast with alacrity, and finally set myself to some hard task that I have long wished to do but have never felt energy enough to attempt before. A positive and directive force empties itself into my habits of dressing, my instinct of hunger and charges my work for the day. All my accomplishments for the day share a common will to power.

If this common element is not to be described as a central drive, it must be called an instinct in itself or else

the result of bodily health, freedom from fatigue, and so on. It is clear enough that these latter influence it, but by no means clear that they are the same thing. Indeed the force may be extraordinarily strong in physically weak bodies, and there is some ground for claiming it can affect health as much as health affects it. This is not, however, to deny that it may have some unexplained physiological basis.

*The will to learn.* For our purposes here the most important aspect of the will to live is that it is also the will to learn. We do not have to account for learning as accident, on the one hand, nor, on the other, to explain its stimulus in terms of the assumed instincts of curiosity, manipulation, workmanship and so on. From one point of view all the qualities of the will to live may be subsumed under the desire for new control, which expresses itself as a desire for new mastery over the interests we already have, and as a desire for new interests.

This character, variously and partially described as curiosity, the passion for creation, the inventive genius, the quest for adventure, the wanderlust, the thirst for research, the willingness to try anything once, lies back of all our progress in any direction and may claim to share with reason the distinction of being known as the human prerogative. Some human beings are so possessed by it that it leads them long distances, spiritually or physically, to discover new elements of culture by which their society is ultimately enriched. Other persons manifest this quality only as a faint reaction of interest to new objects which have been called to their attention. All share in it

to some degree, and both knowledge and the ability to use knowledge are functions of it.

*The method of learning.* As we have said, the will to live may act either directly or through certain special channels of which it is the creator. These channels are, in the first place, instincts, aptitudes, habits, of various sorts, means by which it expresses itself unconsciously. In the second place, the will to live expresses itself through the more delicate and highly specialized function of the intellect. The learning process cannot be understood until all these methods of learning are taken into account.

It has frequently been pointed out that in the lower animals, and especially in the insects, the instinctive equipment is richest and the intelligence poorest, while the higher animals have a higher degree of intelligence and are to a less degree dependent on unconscious stimulation. It would therefore appear that the unconscious aids to learning grow less significant as the importance of intelligence increases, or that unconscious learning declines in importance as conscious learning develops. This appears reasonable, though it is impossible with our present data to prove it.

What is plain, however, is that the intellectual faculty is of slight value unless it has a basis of information on which to act, and that, even among men, unconscious tendencies must be relied on as the chief methods of learning until culture furnishes materials for the intellect to use. The groundwork of knowledge which one man can acquire is very slight. Animals, even if they had intellectual faculties like ours, would scarcely be able to use them,



No great measure of intellectual activity can exist without communication. Those inferences and conclusions which seem so obvious to us, so much a matter of mere common sense, have come to be so not because of independent thought on our part, but by virtue of our intellectual heritage.

The possibility of using intellect in learning is dependent on two things: the acquisition of knowledge by individuals, and its communication between individuals and groups. The relative importance of conscious and unconscious methods of learning in any period or in any group, however, can only be understood by studying what the men of that group or period actually did. Merely deductive conclusions are here of slight importance.

### *The Nature of Sociality*

The foregoing discussion has left without explanation one important phenomenon which cannot be overlooked if the learning process is to be understood. The acquisition of knowledge is dependent on communication, and that is greatly stimulated by the social feelings of men. How are these social feelings to be accounted for?

It is true that sociality is useful and hence is encouraged by a perception of its utility, but such an explanation is now recognized as but partial. The most usual explanation is to call sociality an instinct—the instinct of gregariousness, or an enlargement of the parental instinct. This account seems to us to be unsatisfactory and incomplete.

Another type of explanation is suggested in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* of Adam Smith, though Smith did not and of course could not leave the idea in such form as to anticipate the particular problems shaped by modern sociology. Smith certainly, however, had the idea that social conduct was primary, an involuntary sympathy that often compelled men to act against their own advantage, because they entered so completely into the real or assumed sufferings of others. They were not simply drawn to the others; they felt themselves and the others to be fundamentally one. We did not have individualism first and sociality developing out of it by instinct or in some other way. The principles of individualism and sociality were at least co-ordinate.<sup>1</sup>

However difficult it may be to express this view in terms acceptable to modern psychology, it appears to us to be very near the true one.<sup>2</sup> We are accustomed to regard individualism as the fundamental thing, to take it for granted without need of explanation. Certainly we are ordinarily more conscious of its inconveniences than of the advantages of sociality. Yet if we can bring ourselves to

<sup>1</sup> Giddings pays a high tribute to Adam Smith, but in attempting to expand and improve the theory of sympathy under the name of consciousness of kind he makes what seems to us an error regarding its origin. Giddings, Franklin H., *Principles of Sociology*, New York, 1913, preface and p. 106. Henry Drummond's "struggle for the life of others," is set forth in such terms as would be fitting to the conception of a fundamental sociality. He ascribes this phenomenon, however, to the instinct of reproduction. *Lowell Lectures on the Ascent of Man*, New York, 1894, Chapter VIII.

<sup>2</sup> It is accepted by James Ward in his *Psychological Principles*, pp. 394-398, especially p. 396. Ward quotes Hutcheson and Hume, who no doubt suggested the thought to Smith.

approach the question without the prejudices of suffering human beings these preconceptions can hardly be substantiated. The actual facts of behaviour studied dispassionately afford quite as much evidence of a fundamental other-regarding as of a fundamental self-regarding impulse. The competition engendered among men or groups of men is the result of experience rather than of impulse. Children and the untutored usually show more spontaneous good will to others than do the old and instructed. So far from hostility being the natural state of the savage, he is friendly unless he has been betrayed.

In the struggle for existence, or perhaps we should say better, for self-development, individuation arises. It may, it is true, be found pleasant and indulged for its own sake. But two struggling individuals are not necessarily hostile to each other. Their proper relationship is as two aspirants, so to speak, for the control of nature, where there is room for only one. In the same way an army must sometimes leave its weak and wounded to die, or a nation incarcerate its wrong-doers. There is no real conflict between the wounded and the able-bodied soldier, between the law-abiding and the law-breaking citizen ; or, if there is such a conflict, it is a secondary one.

We have, however, stated what appear to us to be the facts of sociality rather than explained them. Most explanations starting from these facts interpret society as an organism and involve us in mystery and metaphysics. Into these regions we do not wish to enter. But if we cannot explain sociality it seems to us essential to emphasize its great importance, its far-reaching effects, its

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apparently spontaneous character, for these things are frequently undervalued. The point we would make needs no support other than the facts which already sustain it.

## PART II

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERESTS

#### CHAPTER III

##### INTERESTS AND CULTURE

- Economic valuation and valuation in the generic sense
- The source of interests
  - Original interests
  - Derived interests
- The two sides of invention
- Environment as the field in which culture operates
- Race and culture
- Culture areas and culture centres
- Culture traits and culture complexes

#### CHAPTER IV

##### THE SURVIVAL AND DIFFUSION OF INTERESTS

- Factors influencing survival
  - Satiety and the desire for the new
  - Relation of the new interest to existing instincts or aptitudes
  - Relation of the new interest to existing interests
  - Habit
- Individual vs. group in the determination of survival
- The diffusion of interests
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    - Social contagion
    - Emulation
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- Social contacts and culture



## CHAPTER III

### INTERESTS AND CULTURE

#### *Economic Valuation and Valuation in the Generic Sense*

OUR first problem is the psychology and the history of economic valuation : how interests first enter practical life, and what criteria determine their retention. The psychology of economic valuation is the same as that of valuation of any other sort, and in studying the principles of economic valuation we are at the same time studying the principles of valuation or value in the generic sense. We shall here use the term valuation instead of value, in speaking of the interests constituted by the psychological process of valuation, to avoid the difficulty of treating the same term in the same study in two different ways.

As a matter of fact the various sorts of valuations are always running into one another. The incense that a devotee burns before the altar, for instance—his valuation of that is economic, for it requires material effort or expenditure to acquire it. At the same time his valuation of it is religious, since his motive for burning it is to pay devotion to some divinity. Also, as he breathes the

fragrance of the incense, his valuation is to some extent aesthetic.

A valuation itself we shall define simply as any expression of interest, and an economic valuation as any such expression of interest in an economic good or service, interpreted in the widest sense. An expression of interest involves to some degree a judgment as to the nature of the good or service valued, but a valuation is not, to our view, itself constituted by such a judgment. That is to say, my interest in an apple, for instance, is a valuation regardless of whether or not my intellect renders me a judgment as to the virtue of the apple or of apples in general. At the same time, however, my interest in the apple is dependent on my assumption that the apple will serve some purpose for me; that it is, let us say, ripe. A valuation in other words is constituted by the act rather than the judgment of interest, although a judgment of some sort is implicit in the act.

### *The Source of Interests*

*Original interests.* The act of interest is of course ultimately to be referred to the central drive, or will to live, which we have already discussed. The stimulus to interest comes through this will, expressed in its various channels. The data on which valuations are based are provided by the intellect and are preserved in culture.

*Derived interests.* When an interest in one thing gets started, in an individual or in society, it is a focal point for others: by suggesting, on the one hand, new and independent interests similar to it, and, on the other hand,



by inciting interests derived from it. The chief means by which this is accomplished are two: through the transfer of means to ends and ends to means; and by association.

The latter is undoubtedly the more important and to some extent generally enters into the former, so we shall consider it first. It has two aspects. The first is that of so-called contiguity or the conditioned reflex, association between things that have been actually connected. The second, similarity, is an association between things that are similar.

A thing,  $x$ , which I have usually experienced as connected with, or as a part of, a second thing,  $y$ , becomes associated in my mind with  $y$ , and so whenever I experience  $y$  I am likely to think of  $x$ , and vice versa. If  $y$  has also been associated with  $z$ ,  $z$  may recall  $x$  to me, or  $x$  may recall  $z$ , without the conscious interference of  $y$  in the process. I like a thing,  $m$ , which has a certain quality,  $n$ . When I see  $p$  with the same quality,  $n$ , I am predisposed in favour of  $p$ . A man likes plums. They are blue, round, soft and juicy. If he has never seen any grapes he will be predisposed in favour of tasting the first he finds, for they are blue, round, soft and juicy also. Because he already has an interest in plums he acquires an interest in grapes, but he may never discover the excellent qualities of chestnuts. A people has always spun wool for their garments. A glance at the cotton plant suggests that cotton can be utilized in a similar way. The virtues concealed in flax and in the cocoon of the silkworm must be practically an independent discovery.

A very few basic materials, a very few basic principles,

are the foundation of all inventions, and most inventions are only a complication of applications of association. Even where association is not the chief factor in the extension of interests it can scarcely fail to enter somehow or other.

The stock example of the way in which an interest originally a means becomes an end is the case of the man who starts saving money for some specific purpose, let us say for an education. The pleasure of saving for an education becomes transferred to mere saving, and he ends by becoming a miser. I wish to improve my business and buy an automobile ; from using the automobile in this way I come to prize it for itself. Or, I furnish my house with beautiful things because I love the beautiful, and find I have gained such prestige among my neighbours that I now value my possessions as testimonials of my distinction as a connoisseur. In the case of the application of ends to means the process is reversed. The automobile prized for itself becomes a means for improving my business, the furnishings bought to enhance my reputation teach me to respect their beauty. As a matter of fact it would be better to speak not of the transfer of means to ends and ends to means, but of the transfer of means for one end to means for another, since the end of interests is in the man not the thing.

While, however, it is the human intelligence of single individuals that must bridge the gap between an old interest and a new, in the manner here described, the gap must be made as narrow as possible first. To narrow this gap is the service of culture. The more interests there are,

the more there can be. Variety of interests does not represent a series of independent discoveries by a single person, but rather the combined discoveries of many generations. Each person starts where his forebears leave off. The process is cumulative.

Men lived hundreds of thousands of years with only the most rudimentary valuations. In the midst of a rich environment they were unconscious of its potentialities. They had no "interest" in it from which to start. Travellers have often remarked the great unutilized potentialities of the environments of primitive men living to-day. Without previous experience, some sort of a cultural background, they are unable to make the simplest correlations. Thousands of eligible objects of interest are offered to them by their surroundings, of which they notice but few. Their wants are simple, and even when they are offered solutions to these simple wants they may not be able to utilize the solutions.

Travellers have found, for instance, that savages with scant cultural background may be unable to perceive the superior utility of steel axes to stone ones, unless this superiority is painstakingly demonstrated to them. The first white visitors to Manhattan Island presented the Indians with tools more efficient than the tools the Indians were already using. The Indians appeared to prize these highly, yet, when the visitors returned some months later, they found the Indians wearing the tools as ornaments around their necks. Savages usually have to be taught patiently the advantages of superior mechanical devices, and even then they may reject them. In fact they lack

cultural background both to bridge the gap between old and new, and to perceive the superiority of the new. What does this superiority amount to? they ask. Why save time and labour unless one saves it for something else, and what is there to save it for? Yet the children of these same people when educated in our environment have not been proved mentally inferior to ourselves.

In the preceding chapter we discussed the learning process under the heads of the Will to Learn and the Methods of Learning. Experience with primitive peoples shows that while the will to learn is dormant in all human beings, it is culture which furnishes it with a knowledge of specific ends and the means it can use to obtain them; or, more broadly, it is culture which shows what are the means to ends both proximate and ultimate.

### *The Two Sides of Invention*

All economic interests are in a way inventions. We are accustomed, however, to think of inventions as solutions to problems, escapes from recognised predicaments. Some great manufacturing corporations with many such problems employ inventors by the year. Yet, properly speaking, an invention has two sides. A complete invention necessitates finding the solution of a problem, and it also necessitates finding a problem to solve. Sometimes the solution is present before the problem is.

The finding of a problem, however, is not only one part of an invention, it is the larger part. He is a great man who can answer the existing problems of his fellows, but he is a greater one who starts their problems in the first

place. When once the possibility of a steam engine is conceived a hundred practical questions confront inventors ; important as these are, however, they are not nearly so important as the conception that an engine may be made. That, we have been told, arose from a boy's watching the rise and fall of the lid on a boiling tea-kettle. Whether the story is true or not, the point it illustrates is an important one. The solution of the problem of gravitation may be difficult, but it is not so difficult as locating a man who will frame that problem as his response to being hit by a falling apple.

We have just pointed out that men lived hundreds of thousands of years with few or no economic valuations. The earliest economic interests, apart from food, that we find are the use of fire, a cutting instrument, and string. These three inventions are common to practically all peoples and are probably the only ones common to all. We do not know how they arose, but it certainly seems likely that they originated quite as much by men's creating a problem for themselves by means of the application of a solution already furnished by the environment, as by men's efforts to find a solution for a problem independently conceived. The solutions, at all events, were already offered by nature. It is unreasonable to suppose that men should have conceived the desirability of fire and experimented with rubbing sticks and striking flints until they succeeded in getting it. On the contrary they must have known what fire was from seeing fires set by lightning and volcanoes. They must often have seen sparks struck by accident. There are said to be bamboo forests where fires

are caused from the friction of branches rubbing together in the wind.<sup>1</sup> Any man might be accidentally warmed, or find his dinner cooked, by fire from such sources. The step from this to a deliberate use and making of fire would be a comparatively short one, though no doubt the advantages of fire were experienced many times accidentally before any individual really did take that short step. So in the case of the cutting instrument. For ages, perhaps, men cut their hands and feet in climbing over sharp rocks, and even, holding stones in their hands, might have cut themselves, or something else, accidentally. Then at some bright moment it dawned on one of them that the stone that cut his hand would also cut the meat he had been tearing with teeth and fingers. So far as the string is concerned, it would scarcely be possible to take a walk through a field or forest without seeing plants and trees bound together by grass or vines. How many times a savage gathering wood may have found one piece bound to another by creepers until it occurred to him he could deliberately bind creepers around his wood and secure his burden. These inventions were indeed solutions to problems, but they were also problems to solutions already provided.

In discussions of the rationality of men, therefore, it is not sufficient to show that in a given predicament they will do their best to get out of it. We must ask also how far they recognize their predicaments, or how far do they perceive what will serve them before they get into a tight place at all. If we leave moral will and sagacity out of

<sup>1</sup> Elliot, *Prehistoric Man*, 103,

account, however, the capacity in both cases is determined by the basis of information or ideas with which man is endowed through the suggestions of his environment or which he has acquired through generations of learning.

*Environment as the Field in which Culture Operates*

Interests are a matter of two sets of influences, physical and psychological. The interests of any group are obviously limited by its physical contacts. Within the same physical environment, however, we may find contrasting cultures which emphasize quite different features of it. As we should expect, the physical, as distinct from psychological, influences are relatively much more important in the earliest cultures than in the later ones. Thus anthropologists are able to divide cultures at the dawn of history into three quite distinct groups, distinguished in general by the nature of the physical environment and especially distinguished by climate. These cultures are those of the tundra, the mesa and the jungle. The first includes the culture of the treeless regions, steppes, plains and forests of the north of America, Europe, and Asia ; the second is the culture of the highlands, stretching roughly from the Pyrennees through the Alps and Himalayas to the extreme northeastern point of Asia and then southward through the Rockies and the Andes ; and the third is the culture of the low and humid jungle. The original great civilizations of the world, those of the eastern Mediterranean and China in the old world, of the Aztecs, Mayas and Incas in the new, have been civilizations of the mesa ; and although the influence of the original divisions of culture has been

very much broken into in later days, it is of so fundamental a nature that, as Wissler observes, "not even the most hectic diffusion of modern times has been able to eradicate it wholly."<sup>1</sup>

### *Race and Culture*

We should also at least mention the possible physical effects of race as affecting differences of culture. If the brain equipment of different races varies, obviously their psychological equipment varies with it. That most psychological differences ascribed to race are social or environmental rather than physical is suggested by the effects of a complete change of physical and social environment from birth. We have already mentioned the fact that there is no positive proof of physical differences in race as such affecting culture, although the long continued failure of the negroes both to evolve a civilization of their own and to profit from adjacent civilizations suggests that there might be a physical deficiency here. Certainly if there are such physical deficiencies we should know it ; but at present all we can say is that unprejudiced investigation of this subject is badly needed.

### *Culture Areas and Culture Centres*

Apart from the three great general cultural divisions of tundra, mesa and jungle, the surface of the earth is divided into various smaller portions, known as culture areas. Various tribes are included in a single area, but the cultures of all, nevertheless, approximate to a single type. One culture type is distinguished from another by the number

<sup>1</sup> Wissler, *Man and Culture*, 231.



and nature of culture traits and culture complexes—usages, customs and interests surrounding a single trait—within it. Of course in all cases where there is not complete isolation the areas melt into one another on their edges. In spite of this fact, however, and in spite of the fact that the matter of culture types and areas has not as yet been sufficiently studied to enable us to press distinctions too closely, we may make certain rather broad statements with regard to the number and character of these types on any continent. Among the Indians of North America, for example, we can point to the following areas: Plains, Plateau, California, Northern Pacific Coast, Eskimo, MacKenzie, Eastern Woodland, Southeast and Southwest.<sup>1</sup> A provisional study for Africa distinguishes the Desert, Western Sudan, Eastern Sudan, Egypt, East Horn, Congo, Bushman, Hottentot and East African Cattle areas. In all of these cases we see notable differences not only in the kind but in the quality of culture, its vigour and vitality.

A second striking thing about the culture area in relation to the drive is that the area has a centre. Its complexes do not appear equally distributed over it, but are more frequent about some point within, from which they radiate to the edges. A very interesting study of prehistoric stone ornaments in the United States, for instance, shows a large area, covering roughly the eastern half of the United States, in which one type of these ornaments occurs. Within this large area is one slightly smaller, where two types of ornament are found. Another area still smaller contains three types. The central area has four types. This naturally

<sup>1</sup> Wissler, *Man and Culture*, 56.

<sup>2</sup> Herskovitz, *Culture Areas*, 53.

suggests that the several patterns in the area first appeared in the centre, where the drive was located, and thence spread outward.

This is only one illustration of a phenomenon that has frequently been observed. It is true the centres might be merely centres of dispersal and not centres of origin; there is practical proof, however, in some cases at least, that the centre was a true origin, since the traits confined to the small inner zone were the latest while those reaching the outermost zone were the oldest.

The point which is the centre for one trait is very likely to be the centre for others, that is to say the culture centre has a heart whence proceeds the dynamic force that spreads over the whole. The nearer one comes to the culture centre the stronger is likely to be the culture trait, and the more culture traits there are likely to be.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wissler, *Man and Culture*, 53-63.

A parallel, not too exact, may be drawn from the point of view of Western Civilization in general. Up to the time of the fall of Rome we might almost say that in any given period one city was the radiant point of culture for the western world. Successively we note the key positions of Babylon, the cities of Egypt, Cnossos, the Grecian cities and Rome. Even after the fall of Rome and the great succeeding diffusion of civilization, how outstanding for a time are the northern Italian cities; then Paris; then London; and finally New York. One economic historian has attempted to apply this idea much further and make a theory of economic history out of the significance of key cities as the driving centres of culture areas. See Gras, N.S.B., *An Introduction to Economic History*, New York, 1922.

At the same time, of course, that modern Western civilization was developing in this way we can observe a quite different sort of civilization, with culture centres of its own, passing through successive stages in what is now Mexico; and the same phenomenon is observable in Peru and in the southwest of what is now the United States. Throughout the whole of the period, too, a civilization of a third type remained about an almost constant centre in the Far East,

The phenomenon of the central force of a culture centre, which affects the intensity of the various manifestations of culture within an area, suggests to us at once the central drive which we believed affected the intensity of all the various manifestation of interest within a single individual. The existence of a culture centre makes it reasonable to suppose that here was the home of one single individual of outstanding drive or personality, or of a group of such. One indeed would attract another ; one man thinking creatively makes it easier for his fellows to think creatively, and even the tradition of such creative thought could inspire succeeding generations. The folklore of ethnology is, in fact, full of stories of culture heroes, the men who enriched their societies directly by their inventions and indirectly by their influence.

### *Culture Traits and Culture Complexes*

The differing cultures of the various culture areas are built up about special features in the environment which, because of some one's deliberate purpose, because of their frequent recurrence, or because of chance, have called out responses of interest on the part of the people inhabiting the areas. These special features in their simplest form are such original constituents of the environment as a plant or its products, an animal or a mineral. In their more complicated form they include inventions. A feature frequently utilized in the culture area is known as a culture trait.

As we have seen, a culture trait frequently forms a centre from which is built up a culture complex, that is,

a group of interests all involving one trait. A culture, especially a primitive culture, may be said to centre around its complexes. The foundations of the mesa culture, for instance, are said by Wissler to be the trait complexes built up around the cereals, the plough, the cart and cattle.<sup>1</sup>

This means that differences in cultures are due not simply to differences in drive and in environment in general, but to differences in what traits happen to be taken up, what traits happen to expand into a complex. Those traits or complexes that get going are by no means necessarily the best. "It is the initial solution that counts," says Wissler.<sup>2</sup> A trait introduced or expanded with a blare of trumpets, so to speak, frequently triumphs over a more useful response to the environment which comes unheralded or at an inopportune moment. We should note also that a complex useful enough to start with diverts attention to refined and insignificant ways of extending it, leaving the people little energy to take up new traits which would prove very much more useful to them than refinements of old ones.

A trait may expand into a complex in three ways, and an important complex usually illustrates all three of them. In the first place, in order more fully to take advantage of a trait which has commended itself to a people they may be led to make various inventions for its utilization. In the second place, a trait continually before the attention of a people may be used in solving problems suggested by something else. In the third place, the presence of

Wissler, *Man and Culture*, 240.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

a trait may itself directly stimulate interest as to other uses in which it may be applied. Just as a child playing with a toy is able to conceive an extraordinary number of uses to which it can be put—if he is given a tin cup, for instance, it may appear, within five minutes, as a mould for mud pies, a doll's helmet and an aquarium—so the adult mind, playing, as it were, with a trait, may devise various uses for it independent of problems which have arisen. Let us illustrate these three manifestations of interest in the case of the maize complex of the North American Indians.<sup>1</sup>

In the first place, this complex includes the use of the mush ladle, the mortar for grinding corn, the pin for husking it, and the elevated corn crib. All these inventions were stimulated by the desire to utilize the trait more fully.

In the second place, corn husk mats are a feature of the maize complex. Here we may reasonably suppose, although we do not of course know, that there was a desire for mats before it occurred to anyone to utilize corn husks for this purpose. The use of corn cobs for pipes would be another illustration of this.

In the third place, maize was used for various dishes such as green corn, mush, hulled corn and Indian pudding. Here it is likely that some enterprising person in an experimental mood let his glance fall on Indian corn and began to wonder how it would taste boiled green, or ground and made into mush, or hulled, or served as pudding. At any rate this is frequently the way in which modern cooks invent new dishes.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Wissler, *Man and Culture*, 121-127.

The Indian corn complex is no isolated illustration. Such complexes pervade primitive and modern society as well. The mind, it would seem, when once started on a track develops that, and the utmost refinements along one line may appear before we have developments along other lines at all. The obsessional use of certain materials, such as wood, by some peoples and their refusal to see the possibilities in other materials; the exclusive use, in one area, of birchbark for baskets, for tepees, for canoes, and the exclusive use of skins in an adjoining area for the same purposes; the insistence on a variation of one type of utensil for all uses; the recurrence of certain basic forms on which all weapons are modelled; all these are instances as to how great an extent a culture is due to a relatively few themes which, however they get started in the first place, are repeated over and over. The thing that once succeeds in arriving has a very good chance of arriving again.

A visit to any ethnographical museum where arts and artifacts are arranged by peoples will show beyond any question of a doubt how an idea or motive once fairly started may become pervasive, both in affecting old interests and in creating new ones. This people excels in the use of feathers: their sacred objects are made of feathers; feathers ornament their weapons, their utensils and their clothing. Some garments are fashioned entirely of feathers. Another group, whose general development may be very low, have worked out extraordinarily beautiful and clever designs in bead work, which challenge the admiration of the best modern craftsmen. Beads ornament everything

they have, and some things are evidently made for the purpose of utilizing beads. One people makes baskets in infinite variety of forms and for all possible purposes, even for holding liquids. A second people are equally addicted to making everything possible of pottery. More familiar yet, perhaps, than these examples is the recurrence of a single motive in the art of a people. This is striking not only in the art of primitives but also in that of the ancient and even the modern civilizations. In architecture the characteristic of running everything in the same mould is so marked that to this day the United States and some of the British dominions are probably the only countries not dominated beyond the requirements of usefulness and beauty by some one anciently approved type.

The practical bearing of all this is that cultural differences due to differences in environmental fields and in the drives which have started from culture centres are intensified by the apparent accidents of the traits which are taken up and which introduce the culture complexes. The world of primitive society is divided into groups which would have difficulty in meeting on common ground even if each had made the most useful application of environment possible from effort expended. They have grown further apart yet because each has to some extent taken up the less useful traits in its environment and over-institutionalized those originally useful.

Whether a trait survives or not, however, is in the long run determined by its usefulness, and the contacts of peoples are the most important single influence in demonstrating what traits are really useful. The phenomena of

survival and diffusion, however, present certain special problems, psychological as well as physical, and these we shall discuss in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE SURVIVAL AND DIFFUSION OF INTERESTS

#### *Factors Influencing Survival*

*Satiety and the desire for the new.* As a strong central drive makes for the acquisition of new interests it favours the retention of interests already formed, as it favours all positive expressions of personality. This central drive, as we saw, expresses itself particularly in a will to learn, a quest for adventure, a desire to try something never experienced, a will to new life and power. In its extreme form it is conspicuous in only a few persons, who are the leaders or at least the potential leaders of the rest. Everyone, however, has this desire in some degree, if only in the emasculated form of finding new things interesting.

A thing, however, which is interesting only because it is new of course retains its interest only so long as its newness lasts. The law of diminishing returns affects our interests to the extent that novelty recommends them to us. That which is taken up for its novelty and for no other reason soon drops out. Travellers report the great delight with which savages acclaim the new toys brought them; but in many cases the things desired ardently

to-day are to-morrow found scattered in the forest. The beads which have a great run on one voyage will be scarcely looked at on the next. Broken glass, cocked hats made of newspaper, bits of bright string—all of these may have a flourishing "sale" for a day or two and then be regarded with disgust.

Illustrations of the same point are, of course, frequent among ourselves. Individuals want something new solely because it is new and then care for it no more ; how many things are purchased for this reason alone. Society, too, is continually passing through a series of fashions and crazes for irrational things which for one brief moment afford a taste of delight. It may be observed that wherever we see a person or a society following such irrational fashions and crazes with enthusiasm, we are witnessing a discharge of vital power that has failed to find a creative outlet.

Fortunately, however, the passion for the new, even irrationally exercised, is not without its compensations. Many things which society would be slow to take up because they are useful get taken up because they are new, and before they are discarded their usefulness has been discovered and has made them essential. This point we shall mention again when we come to a discussion of emulation.

*Relation of the new interest to existing instincts or aptitudes.* In a special way the retention of a new interest is favoured if its expression is related to an existent instinct or aptitude. This point is so obvious as to need mention only. To give a very simple example, a man at

the outset may be equally interested in the salad on his plate and the foliage in the centrepiece, but it is ten to one that his interest in the salad will have the greater chance of being repeated. A person with artistic sensibilities and a mere collector of pictures may at first be equally enthusiastic over a painting, but it is the artist whose interest will be longest retained.

*Relation of the new interest to existing interests.* Similar in principle to this is another relationship, which the fact of the culture complex will already have suggested to us. An interest related to an existing interest or body of interests has its way made easy. These contiguous or similar interests will not allow it to drop out. They keep it continually in view and predispose a person or group in its favour. Let us give a simple example of this. We have already spoken of the Indian corn complex, a body of inventions, ceremonies and customs all centering around the presence of Indian corn. Now let us suppose a method were discovered of cooking tender green corn husks to serve as greens; and at the same time it were discovered that milkweed tops made an equally healthful and succulent dish. If the two interests were equally strong at first and the two dishes equally useful it would be the greens from corn husks that would be most likely to find a permanent place in the diet of the people. The wild plants, milkweed, might be physically as numerous as the cultivated plants of the Indian corn; but the people were already interested in Indian corn and not interested in milkweed. They would continually "see" the corn and forget the milkweed.

It is even easier to find illustrations of this in present-day than in primitive society. Again and again among ourselves a new interest without connections will drop out, while a much less rational interest will survive because it is related to a going concern on which the people's attention is already concentrated. How acute are our sensibilities to the virtues of a new burnish that will give the supposedly correct dull glow to an automobile, how impervious they are to the merits of an invention for carrying telephone wires under ground. He would be dense indeed who failed to see the ugliness of a cloudy coat of varnish on an automobile, but the far greater ugliness of telephone poles is perceived only by fanciful aesthetes. The one, in short, is connected with an already existing interest and hits us in the eye. The other, having no such connections, does not.

The fact is that the amount of interest anyone has to spend is limited, and he is likely to spend it in the easiest way, on improvements connected with those things which are already taking his attention. A little power of interest goes furthest here. Almost everyone, for instance, will respond to new improvements in radio apparatus. Yet a moment's thought will show us many illustrations of potentially useful improvements which no manufacturer makes, primarily because the public are not especially interested in improvements along those lines. Think, for instance, of the hundreds of millions of dollars which are wasted every year because stockings wear out in the foot before they wear out in the leg. In the same way certain inventions which have been made are very slow in

introduction, for example, simple labour saving devices in the home. The public must be educated to many improvements, and this is often a long process and a hazardous one.

The physiological explanation of the foregoing psychological facts is doubtless very similar to the physiological explanation of the nature of habit. We do not wish to enter into the physiological aspects of psychology any more than is essential, but the point we have just been making suggests a certain explanation. If, as we have seen, an interest is most likely to succeed in being retained when it is related to instincts, aptitudes and interests already existing, it is probable that this connection simplifies the matter of its own physical transmission through nerves to brain; that the making of a channel through which the new interest can establish itself is easier if the new interest may be made a part of the mode of expressing existing interests, instincts or aptitudes. The physiological relationship here, nevertheless, cannot as yet be altogether clearly set forth.

*Habit.* Just as the retention of an interest is favoured by its connection with existing interests, so the mere fact of its own repetition favours its retention and opposes the establishment of a contrary interest. "The phenomena of habit in living beings," says James, "are due to the plasticity of the organic materials of which their bodies are composed."<sup>1</sup> Each interest makes its own route from the outer world to the brain and every time the interest is repeated the channel is worn deeper; thus, other things

<sup>1</sup>James, I, 105.

equal, each succeeding repetition becomes easier. Habit thus diminishes the necessity of attention, prevents fatigue, and is a great economizer of nervous and muscular energy. Further, of course, to the extent that it acts favourably in establishing one interest it acts unfavourably towards the establishment of an interest of a conflicting nature.

We should note that habit, having a physical basis, is not something that can be lightly set aside by a mere resolution. When a man refuses to change an irrational for a rational habit he looks like a weakling or a fool ; it is possible, however, that he is acting rationally after all. The benefit to be derived from the new rational habit may not offset the expenditure of energy necessary to break off the old and secure the new.

In the same way we cannot condemn offhand hide-bound groups and countries as being merely contrary when they turn their faces against sudden new light. It is possible that their attitude is largely one of self-defence. It may be a rational reaction against what may prove to require too severe an effort to sustain. We know well enough what has happened to primitive groups which have adopted in one or two generations the habits of civilization. So psychologists recognize in "conversion" a phenomenon which often destroys morale.

So far as we can tell there are no differences in the psychology of habit in primitive and in present-day societies, although, of course, present-day society contains more influences to counteract habit. We are accustomed to think of primitive society as habit or at least custom bound, and so it is ; and so likewise are we to a far greater

extent than we suppose. Our habits may have been rational in the circumstances under which they were introduced, or at least they may have represented the best thought available at the time ; but under changed circumstances and new light they still continue to enjoy security of tenure. An old interest and a new one of equal rationality never contend on equal terms. The new interest has to be appreciably stronger or more rational than the old one in order to take its place.

*Individual vs. Group in the Determination of Survival*

It is of course plain enough that any individual takes over his interests very largely from the group in which he lives. He does not usually create any new interests, he simply copies those around him ; his individuality, it may even be said, consists chiefly in the way he combines the interests he takes from society.

The fact of this great dependence of the individual on the group in which he lives has led some students to the conclusion that the capacity of determining whether or not an interest shall survive does not reside in the individuals at all, but is, in some more or less mysterious way, a quality of the group, and simply expresses itself through individuals when the time is ripe. In support of this view they point out to us that any new invention or discovery that takes hold is very likely to be made by several persons almost simultaneously, and that while some persons undoubtedly do have ideas in advance of their time, the expenditure of energy involved in this is a mere waste on their part, for ideas in advance of their time are perhaps worse than no

ideas at all—except, perhaps, to excite the wonder of future generations.

Wissler, speaking of the genesis of interests in primitive society, tells us :

“The truth is that in each tribe are produced a wealth of suggestions, yet few of them ever get fertilized, as it were, and so develop into traits . . . . The idea . . . does not readily fit into the culture complex of the group and in consequence does not become a part of culture. It seems to matter not at all as to the merit of the new idea ; it may be one of the basic conceptions of the next great advance in culture, and yet unless the tribal setting is favourable, humanity must wait. It seems strange indeed that there should be so much waste in the making of culture and the tribe be blind to the potentialities of its own best minds, or that man with all his power of thought should proceed by a kind of trial and error method in the working out of his own salvation. No doubt many times in the life history of each tribal culture comes a grand opportunity, which if seized upon with enthusiasm would make it the leader of the world. So it is that the tragedy of tragedies is the birth of a genius before his time.”<sup>1</sup>

A little later he adds that there is no guarantee that an invention “will be given a fair trial and be allowed to stand according to its deserts. Its fitness is chiefly a matter of social belief, and as such subject to all the ills and vagaries of folk thought.”<sup>2</sup>

These statements put the case clearly. It is true enough that it is the social group that decides whether or not an interest shall survive and many an improvement unrelated to an existing culture complex is knocked out at the start.

<sup>1</sup> Wissler, *Man and Culture*, 182-183.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 320.



It is an old story that the history of culture is full of the persecution of innovators. In primitive society a man who made a new invention might be killed. At the present time, of course, we do not openly persecute inventors or destroy inventions, but this apparent difference is not entirely a real one. The prohibitions of the social group are still effective, for in our more sophisticated environment a sagacious innovator does not risk exposing to the public view an improvement that he suspects will be in advance of the times. He sizes up the situation, and, unless he is a man of great courage, he permits his ideas to be still-born. Professor James Harvey Robinson once quoted an observation of Galileo, that it seemed to him the earth went round the sun, but he was willing to keep still about it. Many a present-day potential innovator keeps still about it too.

We have, however, told only half the truth. Wissler, continuing, makes this quite plain. Most material improvements, he says, will "when demonstrated by the inventor find little resistance and in most cases positive encouragement."<sup>1</sup> The burden hence falls on the inventor of an untimely improvement to be a demonstrator as well. The group indeed decides what shall survive, but it is the individual who decides the group. The true culture hero is ultimately such in his capacity of teacher. A group decides with the decisions it has been taught to make through the efforts of its individual members.

<sup>1</sup> Wissler, *Man and Culture*, 320.

*The Diffusion of Interests*

*Rational diffusion.* How is it that the interests of an individual tend to be as many as, and no more than, the interests of the social group of which he happens to be a member? Mere observation of his neighbours, of course, shows him what is useful to them and what they appear to enjoy, from which he may conclude that the same things will be useful or enjoyable to him also. But he takes over from his neighbours their foolish and useless interests almost as readily as he takes over their useful ones; further, he generally limits his interests to the interests of his group. He is slow to learn the interests of outsiders, even when he has opportunity to do so.

*Group psychology. Social contagion.* Of great significance in the matter of diffusion of interests is the psychology of groups. Leaving rationality out of account, we must note that the social psychology of diffusion between individuals within a group is precisely opposite to what it is between groups themselves. There is a special presumption in favour of an interest's spreading within a group and against its spreading from one group to another. One might say indeed that the more the members of a group are disposed to copy each other, the less they are disposed to copy an outsider.

We have already spoken of the fundamentally social nature of men described as "sympathy" by Adam Smith. This, of course, is the basis of a phenomenon which students of sociology long ago pointed out, the peculiar

contagiousness of ideas within a more or less homogeneous group. One man's founded or unfounded joy, founded or unfounded fear, rational or irrational interests influence others, almost in spite of themselves, towards the same feelings or interests. Large numbers of persons doing a certain thing, whatever it is, practically compel the recalcitrant in their midst sooner or later to desire to follow them. Tarde, as is well known, entitled this phenomenon imitation. Social contagion seems to us a better term.

We have already seen that one of the most important psychological principles is that of association; the thought of one thing recalls the thought of another thing associated with it. If there is a true sense of union between men, if I read my neighbour into myself and myself into him, then what he does must influence me. When I see him fearful I think there must be cause for me to fear, and I do fear, whether or no. When he laughs, I laugh likewise. When he wants a thing I want it too. This accounts for the fact that interests once given propulsion travel like wildfire over the surface of society. They may start from the example of a single person with an impressive personality, or they may start no one knows how. Once started, however, they gather strength with numbers and all "good fellows" fall for them. If the interest serves no useful purpose it dies out as its novelty does, but in its heyday of popularity it has such strong presumptions in its favour that a definite exercise of the will may be necessary to enable one to refuse to accept it.

*Group psychology. Emulation.* The desire of one man to equal or surpass his neighbours is another phenomenon

which affects the diffusion of interests, rational or otherwise. Emulation has been called an instinct. To us it appears to be a derivative of the driving force, under special circumstances—the line of least resistance, so to speak, by which the drive can work in a social environment. The drive makes a man want to get on, his neighbours' interests furnish the milestones by which he judges his progress. If he wants to get ahead but does not want to go to the trouble of making his own judgments as to what getting ahead is, his simplest move is to accept the verdict of society about him: to do what his neighbours do, and, if he wishes to surpass them, to surpass them along those lines to which they have already given their sanction. In itself emulation makes no distinction between rationality and irrationality, though as we saw in speaking of the transfer of ends to means, a rational interest originally pursued for the sake of emulation may come to be appreciated eventually for its real usefulness.

Emulation is essentially a phenomenon of diffusion, of creation only in a secondary sense.

*Group psychology. Hostility between groups.* We have said that social psychology affected the spread of interests between groups in precisely the opposite way to that in which it affected their spread within a group; the homogeneity of a group favours the spread of interests within itself, the unlikeness of one group to others checks the spread of their ideas to it and its ideas to them. Though the primary unity of all human interests remains, it is overshadowed by the more conspicuous unity of the interests of persons within a special group. Men try out

various roads of development, and so intent are they to test and emphasize the merits of these differences that they allow the differences to overshadow in significance the similarities of all routes; and this whether or not the groups have ever had occasion to join arms in the struggle for existence. Of course in times of common disaster such surface differences fade out; but under usual circumstances they seem to the ordinary group member to be extremely important.

This attitude is common enough to primitive men in all parts of the world. The foreigner as the representative of a foreign group is almost always mistrusted, unless he happens to be acclaimed as the representative of a superior race or as a god; while at the same time the foreigner who introduces himself on the strength of his own personality as an individual is usually welcomed as a friend. Special names of disdain are often given to members of a foreign group: such are the Hebrew term *gentile*, the Greek and Latin *barbarus*, and the Chinese *fan kwei* (ocean devil).<sup>1</sup> In fact the very word foreigner, as used by some persons among ourselves, carries with it a sort of opprobrium.

This suspicion of other groups is, by the principle of association, extended to their interests. It is a case of doubt me, doubt my dog. Nothing is more striking in the history of culture than the way some cultures succeed for hundreds of years in keeping themselves immune from all outside influences. This characteristic is, of course, particularly noticeable among primitive cultures: Some

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Grierson, 30-32.

groups will have nothing whatever to do with others, and although they exist side by side preserve quite different interests.

We can see the same thing among ourselves, however. When the country went to war with Germany it not only gave up the study of German literature but it gave up eating pretzels. Even when the barriers of active dislike are broken down, it takes some interests a long time to effect a journey from one people to another.

*Social contacts and culture.* The rationality or irrationality of an interest in itself and the psychology of the group which favours or retards the spread of interests by no means, however, account for the whole matter of diffusion. Before diffusion can take place at all social contacts must be established between persons and groups. In the case of contacts between individual persons the great foundation, of course, is language. Physical contacts between groups are brought about by overcoming the physical barriers to communication. In primitive society this communication is established in two ways. One group migrates and combines with another, and the two merge their cultures; or individuals from one group influence individuals in another group. The first method is known as the spread of culture by contact, and the second as the spread of culture by borrowing. When the two groups merge the useful material traits of both are likely to survive. Whether an interest transmitted by borrowing succeeds in establishing itself is influenced by the same conditions that determine the survival of interests in general.

The motives which lead to the inter-relation of groups may be economic rationality or some of those special characteristics we have already considered in our discussion of the learning process. Groups migrate to find better living conditions<sup>1</sup> or because they have a desire to explore; individuals travel for the same reasons.

Although, of course, migrations and journeyings spread both rational and irrational interests, these extended contacts always favour the survival and diffusion of those that are rational, for an interest not fundamentally useful will not be likely to survive the test of being transplanted. The usefulness of material traits, above all others, is subjected to a close examination before they are adapted by an alien people.

Hence extensive social contacts are, incidentally, of the greatest service in stabilizing the interests of groups, and thus, from still another point of view, we are able to perceive the fortunate effects of culture as a means by which men are made the involuntary and unconscious recipients of advantages in the procuring of which they personally had no part. The communication of groups fostered by culture immensely abbreviates the struggle in which reason seeks supremacy over ignorance and prejudice.

<sup>1</sup> The work of Ellsworth Huntington will be recalled as showing to what an extent migrations of peoples have been caused by changes in living conditions due to periodic changes in climate.





# PART III

## THE OBJECTIFYING OF INTERESTS

### CHAPTER V

#### THE EMANCIPATION OF GOODS FROM THEIR SUBJECTIVE ATTRIBUTES

- "Contagion"
- The spiritual nature of ownership
- Illustrations of contagion
- Institutions growing out of contagion
  - Inviolable ownership
  - Destruction of property at death
  - Property marks
- The subjective attitude as interfering with exchange
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### CHAPTER VI

#### STANDARDS OF VALUATION AMONG PRIMITIVE MEN: GOOD WILL AND UTILITY

- The original standard of exchange valuation
- The transition to utility as the standard in the exchange of goods
  - Gift giving in general
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## CHAPTER V

### THE EMANCIPATION OF GOODS FROM THEIR SUBJECTIVE ATTRIBUTES

WE now turn to a different aspect of our problem and for the first time introduce ourselves to economic value as an actual fact on the market. We assume that valuations of some sort, reasonable or unreasonable, have been made: certain services, certain goods are desired; men are conscious of their wants and seek to fulfil them. We now face a second important question, twofold in its nature. Granted that a good service is wanted and granted that it is physically possible to obtain it, are there psychological obstacles to exchange? Further, if exchange can be effected, on what principles are prices to be set? The first query is the topic of this chapter, and the second the topic of the next.

The perception of the utility of exchange, as we shall have occasion to show, arises relatively late. Exchange begins, as a matter of fact, not with the perception of its utility, but as an outgrowth of spontaneous expressions of man's social life. Before we can have even this friendly sort of exchange, however, goods must be regarded as entities to some degree objective and alienable from their possessor.

*"Contagion"*<sup>1</sup>

It would seem that the perception of goods as objects and nothing more than objects would be "natural" to man, if anything is natural to him. The primrose by the river's brim may be something other than a primrose to a poet, but surely, one will say, it is a simple primrose to an untutored savage. The skin that he wears, the spear that he has made, the fish that he has caught and the wild honey that he has discovered—what can these be to him but merely a skin, a spear, a fish and a comb of honey?

There is, however, plenty of evidence to show that the skin, the spear, the fish and the honey may be regarded by the primitive mind not as objective entities but as spiritual emanations, the alienation of which from the possessor is either not to be considered at all, or to be considered only when the proposed new possessor is a friend or intimate of the original owner. There is, in other words, a participation between possessor and possessions. Men's personalities are not limited to their physical bodies, but pertain also to articles associated with them. This is one aspect of a phenomenon known to anthropologists as contagion. From the psychological point of view it is an illustration of contiguity or the conditioned reflex.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This use of the word contagion is more general than its use as "social contagion" on p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> We should note also that it is common in primitive society to attribute a mystical value to certain objects irrespective of their connections with particular persons or groups. It does not appear, however, that this phenomenon has interfered especially with the development of exchange, for such mystically valued objects can generally be exchanged if the price is high enough.

Contagion throws an interesting light on the origin of the idea of property. The concept of property, whether private or communal, is undoubtedly late in arising. A defence of possession is primitive enough, and is found, in fact, among animals<sup>1</sup> but it is only in its later forms that possession involves an idea of law or right. Long before we reach the concept of property as involving law or right, however, we find in contagion an idea which bears an outward resemblance to the legal concept of property, though its underlying principle is quite different.

It is clear that when a man believes that an intimate relationship exists between himself and articles closely associated with him, a peculiar claim over them will be attributed to him by himself, and, to a certain degree, by others, especially by those well disposed to him. To this relationship we shall apply the term ownership, since the possessor—individual or group—is conceived to endow his or its goods with an emanation from his or its own nature. "Ownership," like the legal concept of property, intensifies individuation. It differs from property radically, however, in that while property as a concept of law or right really facilitates exchange by making it easy for claims not only to be secured but to be passed from one person to another, ownership makes exchange extremely difficult, for no one will readily part from that which partakes of his own nature. Lévy-Bruhl believes that the "mystic bond" of ownership is the foundation of property.<sup>2</sup> It seems to us rather that the modern idea of property represents an amalgamation of principles quite different and distinct

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Letourneau, Ch. I.

<sup>2</sup> Lévy-Bruhl, *Fonctions*, 388, 396.

Ownership leads to property from one point of view ; desire of possession leads to it from another. Its mystic source is ownership, its economic source is desire for goods.

The fact that animals defend their possessions, and that certain things appear to be exchanged with readiness in very primitive societies, makes it necessary for us to give a word of caution before proceeding further, lest it be supposed that a subjective attitude towards objects is the only primary attitude of the primitive mind. We do not, in fact, know whether it is or not. It appears to us, however, contrary to the conclusions of Lévy-Bruhl, that the objective attitude has never been entirely wanting, particularly with regard to the physical necessities of life, and perhaps was itself the primary one. At all events, none the less, the importance of the subjective attitude toward goods is important enough in preventing the development of exchange to deserve the attention we shall give it.

### *The Spiritual Nature of Ownership*

The essentially spiritual nature of ownership, expressed by the idea of contagion, is further illustrated in the propensity of primitive men to believe that personal control can and should exist over incorporeal possessions. The distinction that they make between the material and the non-material is a very hazy one. Among peoples in all parts of the earth it has been customary to regard the name as a part of the person of the man who bore it. Sometimes it might not be revealed, lest harm come to the

owner. Here individuation is perhaps even more strongly marked than it is in the holding of material goods.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the right to sing certain songs or to perform certain services might be held the absolute and unique prerogative of certain individuals or groups, although they could voluntarily part with these rights under certain conditions. It is not entirely clear, to be sure, whether in its beginnings the transfer of rights in all kinds of incorporeal things was always inconceivable except under certain definite circumstances, such as the existence of good will between the parties, or not. In the case of the name, certainly, good will was usually essential to transfer, for transfer was in its essence the expression of good will. The gift of one's name was a high mark of honour, and friends sometimes exchanged names. Rights to recite certain songs or to exercise certain charms were passed from one man to another according to certain definite rules that would ensure dignity of treatment on the part of the new possessors; and the privilege of performing certain entertainments might be given by one group to another as a pledge of friendship, after which the givers themselves ceased to perform those particular entertainments.<sup>2</sup> In all these cases the precaution taken in the choice of recipients indicates that the incorporeal rights were not privileges to be parted from lightly, as in the case of a merely commercial transaction. It is true, however, that at a later stage we find incorporeal rights bought and sold, according to a concept similar to our notion of patent and

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Lowie, 235.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 235-243; Spencer and Gillen, *Across Australia*, I, 224.

copyright; a different thing altogether, and a case which indicates how difficult it is to keep straight the different and developing psychologies of institutions which outwardly appear to be the same.

Lévy-Bruhl maintains that the participation between groups and objects, expressed in the idea of "collective representations", is more primitive than that between individuals and objects, or at any rate that collective precede individualized spirits.<sup>1</sup> The spirits of the tribe, for instance, are assumed to live in a certain territory as in Australia<sup>2</sup> and the participation between the social group and the soil is so intimate that the idea is impossible that the soil can be disappropriated.<sup>3</sup> "In the collective representations of primitive mentality," says Lévy-Bruhl, "objects, beings, phenomena, are able to be in a way incomprehensible to us, at the same time themselves and something other than themselves."<sup>4</sup> We shall lay aside for the moment his contention that this manner of looking at things is incomprehensible or even unfamiliar to ourselves. Neither is it necessary to commit ourselves as to his thesis that group-spirit association precedes individual-spirit association in point of development, for it is with the generic phenomenon we are chiefly interested. Since, however, a study of the source material of anthropology reveals many more examples of individual-spirit than group-spirit association, it is with the former that we shall chiefly deal.

<sup>1</sup> Lévy-Bruhl, *Fonctions*, 108.

<sup>2</sup> Malinowski, *Family*, 150.

<sup>3</sup> Lévy-Bruhl, *Fonctions*, 395-396.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.



*Illustrations of Contagion*

Very familiar to students of anthropology is the idea that the nail parings or hair of a person must be hidden or destroyed so that they shall not fall into the hand of an enemy who would be able to work him harm by means of them; an idea parallel to the notion that the name must not be made known. This association of the spirit of a person with a part of his body is similarly extended to what he has used or worn. In certain parts of Melanesia to possess a bit of food or tobacco belonging to another gave one power to kill him.<sup>1</sup> Certain East African women will on no account part with their loin cloths, believing that the possession of the loin cloth carries with it sexual power over its original owner. Similarly the Aymara Indians of Bolivia and Peru "have the idea that the possessor of . . . anything pertaining them can, as long as he holds it, exercise an influence for good or evil over them."<sup>2</sup> The same idea under a different form is illustrated by the Maori of Ao-tea, who pass about an heirloom weapon among the descendants of a warrior, so that each man, by keeping it a while, may partake of its mana.<sup>3</sup> One recalls the marvellous powers associated with King Arthur's Excalibur and other ancient and mediaeval weapons. A man who makes a thing is often conceived to put a part of his own soul into the object.<sup>4</sup> Doubtless many of the taboos which

<sup>1</sup> Coomb, 59. <sup>2</sup> French-Sheldon, 364. <sup>3</sup> Forbes, David, 236. <sup>4</sup> Andersen, 369.

<sup>5</sup> Karsten, 12. In the instance here given a man who wishes to make a shield, drum or other tool or implement must diet, and in various other ways observe abstinence, lest his own weakness should infect his work,

forbid the use of certain goods or other articles are to be explained in their origin by this idea of participation.

The idea of the participation of spirits with certain territories is very common, as we have already observed. We have mentioned the case of the Australians. The Jibaros never aim at territorial conquests. They fear and detest land associated with an enemy.<sup>1</sup> If an East Indian Angami sells an ancestral field, he retains a sod or two as nominally his.<sup>2</sup> Among the Kikuyu and Kamba a dying man could put a curse on land so it could not leave the family.<sup>3</sup> Among the Baganda, though the king claims ownership of the land, if three generations of a clan are buried in a place the land is theirs, despite the king.<sup>4</sup> The idea that land ownership is a mark of gentility<sup>5</sup> may also be associated with the belief in contagion, since land represents permanence, and by continuous ownership the merits of ancestors are shared by the immediate owner.

It is quite possible that the custom described at length by Lévy-Bruhl<sup>6</sup> whereby a person cured by a stranger demands a present, is fundamentally to be explained by the fear of participation or contagion. The sick or wounded has been infected by his contact with the "foreigner" and recompense for this infection takes precedence in his mind over gratitude for being cured.<sup>7</sup>

The idea of participation with many spirits for a long time may be the reason why, in some places, an article

<sup>1</sup> Karsten, 16.    <sup>2</sup> Mills, 44.    <sup>3</sup> Hopley, *Further Researches*, 406.

<sup>4</sup> Roscoe, *Further Notes*, 31.    <sup>5</sup> Cf. Gummere, 51, 279.

<sup>6</sup> Lévy-Bruhl, *Primitive Mentality*, 410-415.

<sup>7</sup> For other examples see Parker, 254; Ward, H., 15.

is valued according to its antiquity alone. So among the primitive folk of Indo-China, where there is no money, gongs, jars and pots are the media of exchange and are held in esteem according to their age. If several centuries old the price may be fantastic.<sup>1</sup> The mat money of Melanesia is more valued the older and blacker it is,<sup>2</sup> and according to its history.<sup>3</sup> A similar custom of valuing old and useless mats obtains in the Congo.<sup>4</sup> The "copper," an object without practical use, which plays a large part in the emulative social life of the Kwakiutl Indians, derives its chief value from the associations it has gathered in its passage from one chief to another.<sup>5</sup>

### *Institutions Growing out of Contagion*

*Inviolable ownership.* The principle which we have called ownership is well illustrated by the practice common in many primitive societies of goods being held inviolate by wives, children and slaves, even when the husband, father or master exercised almost unlimited control over the persons of his dependents. In Australia, for instance, where the position of women is almost as low as it is anywhere, the woman has nevertheless various articles with which her husband cannot interfere<sup>6</sup>. There is no property in common between husband and wife among the Smilkameen Indians of British Columbia<sup>7</sup> nor on the coast of South Alaska, nor in northern British Columbia in

<sup>1</sup> Baudesson, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Codrington, *Melanesians*, 323.

<sup>3</sup> Brown, 304.

<sup>4</sup> Johnston, II, 790.

<sup>5</sup> Boas, *Social Organisation*, 344.

<sup>6</sup> Curr, I, 66.

<sup>7</sup> Allison, 316.

general.<sup>1</sup> The same holds for the Haidas of the Queen Charlotte Islands.<sup>2</sup> Among the Navahos the woman's property is distinct.<sup>3</sup> Lowie observes that in his dealings with American Indians in an attempt to acquire Indian properties he never met a man who would part with his wife's goods without consultation with her.<sup>4</sup> In West Africa, the woman's property is distinct from the man's under the common law.<sup>5</sup>

The theory has been advanced that women are allowed property in goods so long as such property implies the necessity to labour, but so soon as property becomes a mark of respect and honour, men claim it. That this contention can be at best only partially true is proved by the facts that women own various things other than tools of production, and that children and slaves are permitted likewise to hold inviolate certain possessions associated intimately with themselves.

The personality of children is often given a regard in primitive society that it does not have among ourselves. The individuality of a child is accepted and respected,<sup>6</sup> which includes respect for its ownership. The children as well as the women have well recognized property rights among the Yahgans, Onas and Alaculugans of Tierra del Fuego,<sup>7</sup> three of the most primitive tribes known; and this is also especially noted among the Omahas.<sup>8</sup> Lowie relates an interesting experience of being referred by an Indian to his ten year old son when he wished to buy the boy's

<sup>1</sup> Niblack, 254.

<sup>2</sup> Harrison, 473.

<sup>3</sup> Lipps, 113.

<sup>4</sup> Lowie, 202.

<sup>5</sup> Kingsley, 377.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Coomb, 95.

<sup>7</sup> See evidence collected in Cooper, J.M., 179.

<sup>8</sup> Fletcher and LaFlesche, 262.

blanket ; though the child had no idea what the blanket was worth.<sup>1</sup>

The slaves of Borneo hold property of their own<sup>2</sup> and so do slaves among the Bantu.<sup>3</sup> In the lower Congo slaves even hold other slaves.<sup>4</sup> In East Central Africa most men desire their slaves to be rich.<sup>5</sup> The Central African slave, it is said, can possess anything but himself or his own wife and children.<sup>6</sup>

*Destruction of property at death.* There are various motives and beliefs which lead to the custom, frequent among primitive men, of burning or otherwise destroying a man's goods at his death. There is the intention to afford him provisions for his journey into the next world and the desire to do honour to the dead by making a great display at his funeral, as well as the idea that it is not right or fitting that another person should use what has been so intimately associated with him. This last idea is believed by Crawley to be the most primitive ;<sup>7</sup> certainly it is very common. In many cases reported it is difficult to tell just what the prevailing notion is, but where the dwelling of the deceased is destroyed or abandoned we may be fairly certain it is because of an assumed connection of the departed spirit with the place.

The Fuegians burned the house of the dead and buried his articles with him.<sup>8</sup> The Cahuilla Indians of California destroyed the property of the deceased, including his

<sup>1</sup> Lowie, 233.

<sup>2</sup> Roth, H. L., Borneo, 34.

<sup>3</sup> Dundas, Charles, *Native Laws*, 264.

<sup>4</sup> Phillips, 230.

<sup>5</sup> MacDonald, *East Central African Customs*, 101-102.

<sup>6</sup> Cureau, 141.

<sup>7</sup> Crawley, *Mystic Rose*, 98.

<sup>8</sup> Catlin, *Rambles*, 282.

house, in order to prevent the spirit from returning. When these people came to live in more expensive houses on the Indian reservations such destruction looked different to them, and they compromised by not burning the house until three deaths had taken place in it.<sup>1</sup> The Navahos burn the hut in which a man dies<sup>2</sup> and the Hopi formerly tore down a hut after a death, but now no longer do so in closely built towns.<sup>3</sup> So in British Guiana, the dead is buried with his utensils and his house deserted; but in the savannah, where houses are more substantial, the house is preserved.<sup>4</sup> Among these same Indians it was formerly the custom to bury the dead in his hammock, but nowadays if the hammock is new and good it is removed.<sup>5</sup> We have here various cases of the partial modification of an old custom under the influence of economic motives doubtless learned from the whites. The Northern Maidu of California generally burned most, if not all, the property of a man at his death, and at the death of a chief the dance house, in which he was recognized as having special rights, was not infrequently burned.<sup>6</sup>

In the Nicobars all the possessions of the dead were formerly destroyed, but the practice is now confined to his personal property. A dying man is taken to the "dead house,"<sup>7</sup> probably so that his own house may be preserved without being haunted. The house of the dead was destroyed among the Ainos.<sup>8</sup>

The natives of Nyassaland, Northeast Rhodesia and

<sup>1</sup> Hooper, 344.    <sup>2</sup> Lipps, 49.    <sup>3</sup> Hough, 130.    <sup>4</sup> Im Thurn, *Guiana*, 374.

<sup>5</sup> Im Thurn, *Indians*, 225.    <sup>6</sup> Dixon, R. B., 224, 226.    <sup>7</sup> Kloss, 303, 304.

<sup>8</sup> Holland, 233.

Portuguese Zambesia destroy the hut of the deceased at death.<sup>1</sup> Among the Kikuyu and the Kamba the fact that the hut might have to be destroyed at death encouraged the building of poor ones.<sup>2</sup> Among the Bangala of the Upper Congo River the houses of the dead were allowed to fall to ruin,<sup>3</sup> and in South Africa in general the house of the deceased and all articles in it must be burned because polluted.<sup>4</sup>

*Property marks.* It is a very common custom in primitive society for the owner of an article to put a certain mark upon it as a sign of its participation with himself. Whoever then disturbs it is supposed to invoke the enmity of the owner's particular spirit. The property mark is found in regions so widely separated as Australia,<sup>5</sup> Africa,<sup>6</sup> Melanesia,<sup>7</sup> Polynesia,<sup>8</sup> Ceylon,<sup>9</sup> and North America.<sup>10</sup> They were also in use among the ancient Germans.

The property mark may be made in the weapon with which game is killed, thus protecting the game as well as the weapon until the owner can find it and take it away.<sup>12</sup> It may also be made on the boundaries of territories as a

<sup>1</sup> Stigand, 121; cf. Stannus, *Wayao*, 244. <sup>2</sup> Hobley, *Further Researches*, 406.

<sup>3</sup> Weeks, *Bangala*, 109. <sup>4</sup> MacDonald, *South Africa*, 276.

<sup>5</sup> Roth, W.E., *Notes*,<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, 285; Barrett, 32; Granville, 111.

<sup>7</sup> Rivers, *History*, I, 92, 142; II, 394.

<sup>8</sup> Burnett, 357; Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, III, 116.

<sup>9</sup> Seligmann and Brenda, 112. <sup>10</sup> Boas, *Property Marks*, 601.

<sup>11</sup> Gummere, 44, 128. <sup>12</sup> Boas, *Property Marks*, 601.

safeguard against trespass.<sup>1</sup> Such property marks may be either individual, groupal or communal, protecting the property against other individuals, other groups, or other communities. Among the Melanesians the secret societies have their own property marks, and a man's individual property is marked with his society's mark; but since this mark does not protect it against other members of the same society, it is necessary for him to join several secret societies, with quite different memberships, and put the marks of all on his goods so that he shall be completely protected.<sup>2</sup>

It would not be true to claim, however, that all property marks signify a mystic participation between the owner's spirit and the article marked. There is evolution here as elsewhere. In some cases these marks have become mere signboards,<sup>3</sup> and there is nothing to prevent their originating as signboards, of course, just as cattle brands and the peculiar painting and shape of the lobster buoys of American fishermen are merely means by which the owner can more quickly identify what is his.

*The Subjective Attitude as Interfering with Exchange*

*No exchange.* We have already mentioned the fact that the practice of attributing a personality, so to speak, to goods, must interfere considerably with exchange. In primitive society it is common for deaths to be ascribed to sorcery, for which reason it is particularly dangerous for a

<sup>1</sup> Seligmann and Brenda, 112, 116; cf. 115; Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, III, 116.

<sup>2</sup> Rivers, *History* I, 92; cf. II, 394.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Evans, *Dusuns*, 293.



man to part with goods to persons whose intentions he does not know. There may be a refusal to exchange at all.

*Formalities and ceremonies in exchange.* In other cases, certain formalities or ceremonies may be required before exchange can take place. Among the Lhota Nagas, when articles believed peculiarly liable to infection with ill fortune are sold, an old man is employed as an intermediary. He is paid for his service with the understanding that all ill luck from the transaction will fall on him—a practice which must considerably increase the expense of distribution. Among this same people if anything intimately connected with the person is sold, the seller retains a thread or scrapes a tiny shaving from the article, since if he were to sell the whole of something which was almost part of himself the buyer might be able to “magic” him.<sup>1</sup> Unexpected extensions of this law of participation may at any time appear. A traveller in the Eastern Archipelago relates the story of his effort to buy a fish from an old man who had just succeeded, after great difficulty, in catching it. The old man obstinately refused for some time, but finally was induced to part with it on condition that a fin be returned to him. With the fin he was able to make a libation to the spirit of the fish, which was assumed to compensate it from being parted from the person by whom it had suffered itself to be caught.<sup>2</sup>

*Regulations as to what goods may be exchanged for others.* Another characteristic illustration of this method of regarding an article as something more than a mere

<sup>1</sup> Mills, 144.

<sup>2</sup> Forbes, H. O., *Wanderings*, 309.

physical object of a certain size, colour, shape, nature or physical use is afforded by a custom by which certain things must always be exchanged only for certain other things. This is especially to be remarked in the islands of the Pacific. For instance, the Marind-anim of Dutch South New Guinea will exchange articles of need only for articles of need, food for food, and so on.<sup>1</sup> In the Solomon Islands and Bismarck Archipelago, likewise, similar things must always be exchanged for each other: necessities for necessities; iron hatchets for stone hatchets; taro for tobacco.<sup>2</sup>

The famous traveller of the seventeenth century, Peter Mundy, was unable to buy any cattle in St. Lawrence, Madagascar, because the people would exchange them only for large cornelian beads, though sheep, hens, fish, milk and oranges could be bought with various trade articles.<sup>3</sup> The payment for rent in parts of Borneo is definitely specified in certain animals.<sup>4</sup> In British North Borneo a certain charm against disease may be purchased only by rice; and if the would-be purchaser has no rice but only money he must buy rice with the money before he can have the charm.<sup>5</sup> Even to-day when the Lhota Nagas have been long in touch with the British, it is said that cotton is almost invariably exchanged for salt.<sup>6</sup>

The practice of making exchange or giving payment for services in certain definite things is especially marked in transactions to which something of a ceremonial nature is

<sup>1</sup> Wirz, I, 129.      <sup>2</sup> Thurnwald, 35, 40.      <sup>3</sup> Temple, *Travels*, III, 366-367.

<sup>4</sup> Roth, H. L., *Borneo*, 22.      <sup>5</sup> Evans, *Orang Dusun*, 156.      <sup>6</sup> Mills, 44.

attached ; for here formality most readily entrenches itself. Clarified butter from the Todas for grain from the Kotas is an exchange which takes place formally every year.<sup>1</sup> In the Philippines, bronze Chinese gongs, articles valued highly and held almost as heirlooms "frequently form a part of the purchase price where dignity is an essential factor, especially weddings and the payment of blood money."<sup>2</sup> Among the Motu the bride payment consists by custom of ten white shell armlets, two shell necklaces, a pig and axe.<sup>3</sup>

In some of these cases it is possible that the conventions of barter have some other source than an assumed original personality in the objects exchanged. We should note, however, that an object may acquire such a personality from the associations which cling to it from being used in ceremonial exchange of any nature.

*"Money" which is used chiefly for certain limited purposes.* The mat money of the Banks Islands will buy anything, but for the most part it is used to purchase rank in the Suge Club.<sup>4</sup> Among the Solomon Islands and in the Bismarck Archipelago shell money is used only for the purchase of a wife, for the payment of allies in war, or for the wergild ; that is to say, its function is social as much as economic. At the same time possession of it gives the owner prestige in his community.<sup>5</sup>

In Rossel Island there are two kinds of money, Kö and Dap, of which the latter is not only to be used by men

<sup>1</sup> Rivers, *Todas*, 638-639.

<sup>2</sup> Kroeber, *Philippines*, 111.

<sup>3</sup> Turner, W.Y., 495.

<sup>4</sup> Codrington, *Melanesians*, 323 ; cf. Speiser, 104.

<sup>5</sup> Thurnwald, 38.

alone, but certain things can be purchased only with it. One special class or denomination of this money is used to pay for wives, concubines and pigs, and when it "passes from person to person it is handled with great reverence and a crouching attitude is maintained."<sup>1</sup>

In his work on the Philosophy of Money, Simmel notes that after regular money had been introduced the Czechs continued to use cattle, and the California Indians shells, for the wergild. Temple gifts among the Jews must be paid in kind, and a man who had brought his tithe a long distance in the form of money must buy goods for the presentation.<sup>2</sup>

### *Objective Equivalence and Money*

When once a common medium of exchange has arisen in a society its use tends to objectify the articles which it purchases. Articles which may be valued in terms of some other articles become themselves disassociated from the special valuations attributed to them by individuals. The increasing frequency of exchange made possible by a medium hastens this process in another way.

In discussions and disputes as to the origin of money it would clarify matters considerably if we could first arrive at a definition of what money is. Properly speaking it appears to us that it is an objective means of exchange. A measure of value also in some sense it must always be, although its value may be an attributed one, the original purpose of which has been forgotten. Money thus defined can originate from an article which was primarily either a

<sup>1</sup> Armstrong, 425, 428.

<sup>2</sup> Simmel, 378, 379.

medium of exchange or a standard of value. When a medium of exchange becomes associated in exchange with certain goods only, as we have seen is frequently the case with so-called moneys in primitive society, it usually falls out of the running as a candidate for becoming a true money. It has been doubted, indeed, if we have any truly "disassociated" media of exchange in primitive society. The shell money of New Britain perhaps approaches this most nearly. As the idea of a truly objective medium of exchange is not developed by most primitive peoples on their own account, so too they often have the greatest difficulty in accepting European money until its use has been taught them.

This conception of the nature of money is in accord with the theory of Menger<sup>1</sup> that money arises from that article which has the greatest saleableness :

"The theory of money necessarily presupposes a theory of the saleableness of goods. If we grasp this we shall be able to understand how the almost unlimited saleableness of money is only a special case—presenting only a difference in degree—of a generic phenomenon of economic life, namely the difference in the saleableness of commodities in general."<sup>2</sup>

Saleableness, however, is not a matter due merely to direct physical causes, but to the objectivity with which the commodity is customarily regarded.

### *The Growth of Objectivity*

While the existence of money tends to objectify the objects it purchases, it is by no means the chief cause of

<sup>1</sup> Menger, 230-255.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

such objectification. As we have seen, a true money is chiefly itself a result of economic contacts intensive or extensive. These contacts not only objectify the commodity which serves as money, and through money tend to objectify all other commodities, but they objectify all these other commodities directly also.

Eventually, it may be, the members of a small isolated non-trading community would learn by their own experience the difference between material and immaterial things and that the value of objects is ultimately objective. In fact, however, it is by the increase of industry and trade that goods become disassociated from the special subjective valuations attributed to them by individual persons or groups. This becomes the more clear to us when we perceive that even among ourselves many traces of subjective attribution linger, and we would not ourselves perhaps make sweeping objective estimates of things unless we were practically compelled to do so by economic contacts.

When Lévy-Bruhl spoke of the "mystic bond" pertaining between possessor and possessions in primitive society he declared that such ideas were "incomprehensible" to ourselves. This is far from being the case, and the facts are a further illustration of the essential similarity of primitive and civilized mentality. Let us take, for instance, Lévy-Bruhl's example of the association of a certain territory with the spirits of a group in such a way that its alienation is inconceivable. Certainly this is not incomprehensible to us, who can see, even in the United States, the attachment that is often felt by a

family for its ancestral home or for old pieces of furniture which it is thought unfitting should leave the family. It is even more marked in the almost universal practice of considering the territory of a nation as essentially the nation itself. What makes the idea of foreign conquest and invasion so terrible to a patriot is the fear that with the territory all else must be lost; though in so far as a nation means anything at all, it means the transforming spirit of its people.

The case of subjective attributes assumed by goods from their associations with a particular person is familiar enough to us likewise. Like primitives we all have certain possessions which we might, if necessary, destroy, but which we would not sell. A gift is the more valued if it represents the labour of the giver. A piece of work on which we have long laboured seems somehow to express ourselves, and frequently it is true that we part with such unwillingly. Professor Taussig observes, in a slightly different connection: "There are cold and impassive men of affairs to whom it costs not a pang to sell out or abandon an established enterprise and turn at once to another. Yet I suspect that in the majority of cases a shift of this kind means some heart-wrench."<sup>1</sup> Goods made by hand partake of the personality of him who made them; even when we do not know the person, the fact that some one has spent himself over a piece of work gives that work a value beyond that of a similar thing made by machinery. In his well-known theory as to values imparted by the possibility of invidious

<sup>1</sup> Taussig, 115.

comparison, Veblen explains the higher prices received for hand-made goods as due to the capacity of these goods to testify to the wealth of the possessor, since by displaying hand-made articles he announces to the world that he is so superior a man as to be able to pay for useless labour.<sup>1</sup> But persons who show otherwise in their lives no desire for love of display often exhibit great appreciation for hand-made goods, quite apart from their possibly superior beauty. Nor can it be attributed entirely to love of display or to "mere" custom that the cloths and vestments used in sacred services must be a work of devotion, even if the labour be crudely done; nor that the first garments of a new-born child are usually hand-fashioned.

We are familiar likewise with the custom of valuing articles on account of their antiquity or because of their distinguished associations. The staff of St. Francis, the compass of Columbus, Napoleon's hat, the pen that signed the Declaration of Independence—not to show a regard for these things is usually to prove one's self lacking in a proper spirit of reverence. The custom of primitives in tearing down the hut where a death has taken place may be paralleled by the case of houses in twentieth century neighbourhoods which no one can be found to inhabit because they are haunted.

The stage in which such ideas interfere with the development of economic value is, however, for all practical purposes passed. The traces of it that remain are interesting, but the main current of exchange is not affected by

<sup>1</sup> Veblen, 169.



them. What has accomplished this evolution may be in part a real difference in attitude, as we have mentioned ; but above and beyond all this it is the vast increase in trade, in the number and kind of articles owned, and in that division of labour through which almost nothing is made entirely by one person. A man of the twentieth century can afford a sentimental attachment to, let us say, a few books ; but if, as is likely, he has scores of other possessions, to feel such an attachment to them all would wear him out. The workman who devotes his spare evenings for a year to a piece of wood-carving may treasure it so much that he would never part with it ; but he certainly has no such attitude toward the products of the machine which day after day he helps to turn out the hundredth part of a spark plug.

The emancipation of goods from our subjective regard for them is thus not by any means so important as a result of changes in human nature as it is the result of a physical increase in the number of goods, efficiency in their manufacture and frequency in their exchange. In ourselves we may still often enough observe that same attitude of mind that seems so irrational and even ridiculous when described in slightly different terms and attributed to another people. What we have chiefly to be grateful for is those material changes which, slow as they are, come far more easily and fast than changes in man's innate capacity to reason.

## CHAPTER VI

### STANDARDS OF VALUATION AMONG PRIMITIVE MEN : GOOD WILL AND UTILITY

#### *The Original Standard of Exchange Valuation*

WHEN exchanges take place in the modern market the effort of buyers is to give as little and of sellers to get as much as possible. In the first prices they set they are, of course, influenced by what experience has taught them it would be reasonable to ask. They have really no "standard" in valuation, however ; they desire maximum gain, and use their knowledge of the market to assist them in setting a price that some one will pay. They do not weigh values themselves directly and in the first instance. They take over the valuations of the market, although, of course, by picking and choosing, by setting prices higher or lower and by buying more or less they eventually and by degrees modify these already existent valuations.

In primitive society the first persons to exchange have, of course, no experience of the market by which to make their valuations. How then shall they arrive at them ? Will they ask the greatest conceivable price and gradually

work down? Or will they value their goods in terms of their utilities, their "values in use?" Or in terms of labour cost? Or in some other way?

In accordance with our general proposition that rationality is acquired by experience we should not expect the first persons to exchange to be desirous of the greatest possible gain, since before they become gain-seekers on principle they must learn the advantages for which gain can be applied. *A priori* it would appear that their valuations would be more likely to be made in terms of utilities or in terms of labour cost. A study of the actual data dealing with primitive exchange rules the latter out. There is no evidence that primitive men made valuations in terms of labour cost at all. Time and effort to them were something less, or more, than money. The observation that "labour . . . is the real measure of the exchangeable value of all commodities" finds no support in the practices of primitive society.<sup>1</sup>

Did they, then, make their valuations in terms of equal utilities? Yes, partly so, after they had learned how these utilities should be measured. The very first exchanges, however, were made on the basis of yet another principle. As values on the market, the expressions of marginal utilities, grow out of personal valuations of utility, so personal valuations of utility are themselves in the first place an outgrowth of something else. The very first exchanges of all were of gifts and intimate personal services.

<sup>1</sup> For striking examples of failure to accord value to time and labour even when exchange is well developed see for Africa, Gold Coast, Cardinall, 96, 97; French Congo, Cureau, 245; for New Caledonia, Coote, 168; for North American Indians, Niblack, 337.

The ideal of exchange was an equivalence of good will. In the intimate family group, it is true, certain tasks were essential to the common life, and their performance had to be enforced by compulsion, if necessary. Apart from this, however, a man's services were valued according to his ability to serve, his gifts according to his ability to give. The standard was intangible but no less real than that which holds among us in the intimate association of the family group. The sense of equivalence among primitive men was keen enough; it was, indeed, but one aspect of their sense of the just, the fitting, the proper, the moral sense.

From the outset, as we shall see, it is probable that the giving of services had some economic significance. Gift-giving as an expression of good will did not, however, necessarily involve at first that the recipient of the gift should necessarily esteem it in an objective way. Yet by experience of the material advantages of goods thus received economic interests were extended and sharpened, and persons thus learned to desire and weigh the utilities of gifts as goods. At the same time such exchange as this taught the advantage of exchange in general. These two things went together. From the first arose the measurement of utilities, from the second arose the market.

Obviously, the first exchanges in the broad sense were made within a narrow group of persons intimately acquainted with one another. "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," is the ideal both of gift-giving and of service. Our study of the foundations of value must start, therefore, from a consideration of all those aspects of

give and take in society which are not usually considered to be directly economic in nature: divisions of favours within the family group, exchanges between friends and neighbours, and similar exchanges which take place on the basis of other principles than the utility of the goods purchased or the services rendered: social institutions which, says Bücher,<sup>1</sup> "no one will think of classifying . . . under the head of exchange." No one will, indeed, if he starts with a definition of exchange based on its nature at a later stage of its development and is interested only in the historical facts of its career thereafter. If, however, he wants to know what psychology underlies the earlier aspects of exchange and continues to influence its later ones, he cannot afford to overlook the original forms out of which our present day value on the market set forth, and from which, in the case of services, at least, it has not yet entirely succeeded in liberating itself. That exactitude of reckoning and balancing of utilities is slow in arising in the intimate association of friends and relatives, and perhaps never reaches perfection there, does not alter the fact that the more formal relations which do finally develop and wherein exactitude and accuracy are reached are made possible by this experience.

The transformation of the standard of valuation from good will to utility was a matter of learning and was brought about through the extension of trading relations. When economic desires were acquired on a large scale, and economic motives grew in significance, the ideal of an equivalence of good will, involving service according to

<sup>1</sup> Bücher, 107.

ability and reward according to need, did not grow less important absolutely, perhaps, but it became relatively less important than a more objective standard of valuation. At the same time, as economic relations were extended and persons not intimately acquainted with one another engaged in exchange the older standard lost its meaning. No one could be sure that he knew what was the good will of another, nor could he estimate another's effort in giving or his need in receiving ; further, if he was not intimately acquainted with that other he was not likely to care.

The sale of services was by no means so extensive as that of goods, and experience gave less opportunity to learn all the advantages of utility as such. At the same time, moreover, in the case of the purchase and sale of services the "commodity" was inseparably bound up with a person. The connection of employer and employed, or layman and professional man, too, was likely to be close. For one, or two, or all of these reasons the old ideal of good will—performance according to ability, reward according to need—persisted a long time ; and even, as we shall see, it is still regarded as practicable, although in fact it is usually confused with still another standard of valuation.

*The Transition to Utility as the Standard in the Exchange of Goods*

*Gift giving in general.* The practice of gift-giving is very extensive. It is to be found in all primitive groups. The primitive man made many gifts both within his group and to guests and strangers. Gifts were especially likely to be made on special occasions marking important stages in life: birth, initiation, marriage and death. Illustrations of gift giving are also, of course, common among the peoples of ancient times. The older classical literature, particularly the Iliad and the Odyssey, abounds in references to it.

Even in those groups where possessions are held in what is called communism, there is at least some opportunity for gift giving. We have already seen that among no people, probably, was communism absolute. Always certain things have been too closely associated with the person of the possessor to be passed about indiscriminately. Yet these intimate possessions could be given to a friend, and to give such was, indeed, the highest proof of friendship. Further, mere inertia would stand in the way of complete division of all the products or acquisitions made by a member of a group. He had considerable latitude in pressing his possessions on others, even in such cases as the others might be said to have had a customary right to them. But many of the instances recorded as communism are really proofs of no customary rights, but only of a generosity and hospitality unfamiliar to civilized peoples. In speaking of Plains Indian etiquette, for instance, Lowie observes :

"A host who should not regale a visitor at any hour of the day or night with such provisions as were at his command would be set down as a churl and lose his standing in the community. But it is a far cry from this generosity enforced by standards of ethics and good breeding to a communistic theory that would permit the guest to appropriate food unbidden. No such theory is maintained or put into practice, hence the rights of private ownership remain unchallenged."<sup>1</sup>

The giving of a gift, although it does not require the return of another gift, does require a compensation of some sort, in esteem, gratitude, good will or otherwise. As we have said, primitive man was not lacking in a sense of equivalence. He recognised that some return must be made. As a matter of fact, however, a material recompense is frequently much easier to make than a spiritual one. Consequently we find, in most cases of gift giving, that a material return was actually made, immediately or at some later period.

*Return gifts.* As gifts made in a friendly spirit were often, if not generally, recompensed with another gift, so very frequently gifts were made in full expectation of a material return, which might or might not be specified. The advantages of a material return had been learned. One step, in other words, had been taken towards trade.

Curiously enough, some of the first signs of transition occur in connection with institutions which we now regard as the proper province of subjective considerations alone. That is to say, we find a sense of material valuation entering into men's most intimate personal relations. Such, for instance, is the transition which we note in the case of

<sup>1</sup> Lowie, 207.



man's relations with his divinity. Very early he comes to offer a specific material sacrifice to obtain a specific material reward or to avert a specific material catastrophe. It is even possible that in some societies the first decided movement towards a real objective or economic exchange came in connection with men's relations to their gods.<sup>1</sup>

The custom of demanding a gift for a gift was so common among American Indians that the term Indian gifts is understood to mean gifts which demand a return. This is characteristic not only of the Indians of the Northwest Coast, where presents are nicely graded according to the ability of the recipient to make a return,<sup>2</sup> but it is also characteristic of the Yahgans of Tierra del Fuego, one of the least advanced tribes of the New World.<sup>3</sup>

Of the Andaman Islanders, also a very primitive people, it is said :

“ They set no fixed values on their various properties and rarely make or procure anything with the express object of disposing of it in barter. Apparently they prefer to regard their transactions as presentations, for their mode of negotiating is to *give* such objects as are desired by another in the hope of receiving in return something for which they have expressed a wish, it being tacitly understood that unless otherwise mentioned beforehand no ‘ present ’ is to be accepted without an equivalent being rendered.”

<sup>1</sup> We should note also a degeneration from degeneration itself in men's relations with their gods, when they come to substitute worthless symbols of material things for the material things themselves, thus avoiding any sort of sacrifice altogether. The well known custom of the Chinese in scattering counterfeit money at funerals is an example of this. For an analogous practice among American Indians see Schoolcraft, 89. Cf. also Chamberlain, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Niblack, 362, 565, 366.

<sup>3</sup> Weddell, 153.

In fact, if these wishes are not realized, quarrels are the result; and a fairly definite set of customary values in exchange has come to be recognised.<sup>1</sup>

The custom of making return gifts prevails also throughout the islands of the Pacific. Rivers observes that the idea of gift for gift is strongly rooted in the Melanesian mind.<sup>2</sup> In German New Guinea there is always a return of gift for gift, except between brothers.<sup>3</sup> In Fiji a chief sends gifts to a village and says what he wants in return.<sup>4</sup> When an exchange of gifts took place at the Fijian Solevu, or Great Presentation, nothing was said if the offering on one side fell short of what the other believed just, but subsequent gossip was calculated to make the delinquents uneasy.<sup>5</sup> In Samoa not only was there the greatest amount of gift giving within the family group, but it was the custom, on the arrival of strangers, for word to be sent through the district, and an appointed man decided what each family should give the newcomers.<sup>6</sup> The guests brought gifts also; Mr. Churchward, at one time consul in Samoa, relates an amusing experience of conforming to custom by slipping money into the hand of his hostess on leaving her house.<sup>7</sup> One observer notes an occasion when some Samoans visited Fiji. They were presented with mats, taro, sugar canes, yams, and pottery, which they counted, and gave thanks for just so much.<sup>8</sup> It is said of the Kingsmill Islanders that they

<sup>1</sup> Man, *Aboriginal Inhabitants*, 340.

<sup>2</sup> Rivers, *History*, II. 107.    <sup>3</sup> Neuhauss, II., 316.    <sup>4</sup> Cooper, H.S., I, 163.

<sup>5</sup> Thomson, *Figians*, 281.    <sup>6</sup> Turner, George, *Polynesia*, 198.

<sup>7</sup> Churchward, 120.    <sup>8</sup> Cumming, II, 240, 241.

"never buy or sell, but if any person desires an article which another has he asks for it, and . . . is seldom refused; it is the general understanding that such favours should be returned and that the request should only be made to a person who can afford to do so."

In the Loyalty group it is common for a man to take property of another in his presence, the presumption being that the owner will protest if he objects. The despoiled person has the equal privilege of taking what he wishes in return.<sup>2</sup> In this case we have an illustration of a practice which Europeans have usually set down as stealing, but which is probably only a variation of gift exchange. A similar explanation of "stealing" is given by an early visitor to Tahiti.<sup>3</sup>

The Maori of New Zealand had no real barter, but while visiting they took what articles they wanted. Their hosts returned their visits and reciprocated this attention.<sup>4</sup>

Spencer and Gillen relate an incident in the churinga ceremonies among the northern tribes of Central Australia, where the visitors apologised for the paucity of the gifts they brought, giving various excuses, such as the laziness of their women. The leader of the hosts, however, after inspecting the presents, announced, "It is enough."<sup>5</sup>

Among the African Bantu

"a gift is never recoverable, but it is customary with many tribes for a return gift to be given and this may amount to a claim . . . Moreover, a gift is usually given as a form of greeting, and if no return greeting were offered this would be construed as a hostile act."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wilkes, V. 89.    <sup>2</sup> Hadfield, 26.    <sup>3</sup> Corney, II, 465.    <sup>4</sup> Taylor, 359, 360.

<sup>5</sup> Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes*, 261-263; cf. *Native Tribes*, 165.

<sup>6</sup> Dundas, Chas., *Native Laws*, 276; cf. Roth, H. L., *Salutations*, 176, 177.

*Experience of European travellers with gift giving.* European travellers and explorers are familiar enough with the practice of gift making among primitive peoples. Sometimes these peoples would accept no return, desiring only the good-will of the whites.<sup>1</sup> This was especially likely to be the case when they had had no experience with Europeans before. The early French explorer, Perouse, wrote that the natives of Easter Island and Mowee brought loaded canoes and desired nothing.<sup>2</sup> Dom Domingo Boenechea, one of the earliest visitors to Tahiti, describes the natives as coming out with cocoanuts for which he gave them trifles. These natives would accept nothing after their cocoanuts had given out, yet they insisted on making certain presentations of their own without accepting anything themselves.<sup>3</sup> Columbus was much impressed by the willingness of the natives to give anything he wanted, and be content with any trifles in return.<sup>4</sup>

More often, however, a return was definitely expected if not specified. Amerigo Vespucci notes that the aborigines were liberal in giving, also in asking, although they had no trade.<sup>5</sup> The well-known traveller, Dixon, reports an exchange of presents with an Indian chief who waited to see what Dixon would give before he gave.<sup>6</sup> In some cases the acceptance of gifts was so costly that travellers have had good reason to recall *timeo Danaos et*

<sup>1</sup>Cf. pp. 28-29.    <sup>2</sup>Perouse, II, 241.

<sup>3</sup>Corney, I, 292, 296, 300; cf. also III, 61.

<sup>4</sup>Young, 41.    <sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 124.    <sup>6</sup>Dixon, Geo., 253.

*dona ferentes.* Livingstone, for instance, when passing through the Chiboque country, was offered several pigs. Out of courtesy he accepted one, and sent various European articles as a gift to the chief who had made the present. These the chief declined, and demanded an ox in return for his pig.<sup>1</sup>

Among the Motu of New Guinea it is said to be cheaper to buy than to receive presents, because of continual reminders, no matter how much you have already given. A present may be taken back if not reciprocated immediately.<sup>2</sup> The New Zealanders were said to demand a much larger return when the exchange was by gifts which is "the most expensive method of purchase in vogue."<sup>3</sup> In his dealings with the Society Islanders Captain Cook found it better policy for the sake of friendliness to comply with the requests of the natives rather than to attempt an approximately equal exchange. When they made a gift it was their custom to declare what they wanted in return, and so he says: "What we get by gift comes dearer than what we get by barter."<sup>4</sup>

*The limitations of gift exchange.* Gift exchange is an extremely good method of manifesting good will, but an extremely bad method of gratifying economic wants. So soon as the desire for the thing is greater than the desire for an evidence of good will, the utility of the gift is weighed, and a man takes care not only that he gets a gift in return for his, but that he gives no utility greater to him than the utility he receives in exchange for it. More-

<sup>1</sup> Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, 318, 319.

<sup>2</sup> Turner, W. Y., 493.    <sup>3</sup> Polack, II, 157, 158.    <sup>4</sup> Cook, II, 73.

over, as his desires expand, it eventually comes about that they cannot be completely satisfied with gift exchange at all.

None the less the transition to utility as a standard is a slow one. Considerations of friendliness influence valuations for a long time, and among some peoples, as the Samoans, they do not disappear until white influence comes in. Further, some peoples cling to the gift method of exchange almost stupidly, it would seem, even when considerations of good will are no longer present—an illustration of the compelling force of custom.

When the utility standard once gets started, however, it is extended, of course, to relations with peoples with whom there was never any thought of exchange on the basis of a standard of good will. In such cases, indeed, good will can itself grow out of economic relations, the effect rather than the cause of them.

At the beginning of the chapter we spoke of the "standard" of maximum gain as the modern motive behind valuations. It is not our purpose here to show how that eventually superseded the personal utility standard; it is fairly obvious how that followed with the development of the market and the increase of economic interests. In our eighth chapter, however, it will appear that this final development of the method of valuation, the ultimate objectification of value, was also not unknown in primitive society.

*The Transition to Utility as the Standard in the  
Exchange of Services*

*Ability and need vs. utility.* As we have said there were certain peculiarities connected with the exchange of services that do not hold in the case of the exchange of goods. The two cases are not entirely analagous. In particular, an object or article of exchange may be regarded as a thing merely, but a service can never be entirely disassociated in thought from the individual who performs it. His presence is a continual reminder of the personal element in service. For this reason we should expect the transition from a standard of good will to one of utility to be less complete in the case of services.

On the other hand, the first exchanges of goods were exchanges for the most part of extras, of things not customarily essential to the life of the group. The first exchanges of services, however, came about through the division of necessary labour. Thus a certain amount of valuation in terms of utility had been present in the case of the exchange of services from the very beginning. While, therefore, we should expect the complete establishment of a standard of utility to be slower in the case of services than of goods, we should expect to find some signs of it at the outset. We should expect it both to begin earlier and to take a greater time to fulfil itself. In the case of services we should expect the two standards to be for a very long period more or less mixed.

This is exactly what we do find. The full expression

of the ideal of good will appears perhaps only in the relationship between man and his divinity, in the small family group, and in some of the simpler social organizations. The utility standard of valuation enters to some extent from the very beginning in all but the very closest human relationships. In so-called communal groups larger than the simple family—the extended family, the clan, the village or whatever it may be—the general standard of good will requiring production according to ability and distribution according to need would obviously require extraordinary virtue to effect voluntarily or extraordinary wisdom to secure by compulsion. “Communism” even when the word is correctly used rarely implies such a standard as this. It may mean an exact and equal division among all the members of a community or their families, for the sake chiefly of convenience; it may mean distribution according to status, a point we shall discuss later; or, more usually, it means a combination of one or both of these principles with some influence of the criterion of ability and need and some appreciation of utility at the same time.

Signs of transition to a standard that will encourage production occur very early in the so-called communal group. These are illustrated in the custom of allowing the person who finds anything the privilege of keeping a special portion for himself. In the hunting expeditions of early society, where the spoils are divided among all the people, the one who first kills or wounds an animal may be entitled to a part as his own above and beyond the share which he can claim by virtue of his group



membership as such. When land is tilled by a group it is usually the practice to divide it in plots for the season, and each man reaps the advantage of the care he gives to his own plot. Such land tenure cannot strictly be called merely communal. Other special rewards were given to those who performed distinguished service for the group, as to those who were bravest in war.

So the standard of production according to ability and distribution according to need was soon modified in the case of professional services also. Originally payment for these was by free gifts, supposedly representing the ability of the recipient to pay. A poor man may not be required to pay at all. Very soon, however, the new standard appears. A person who will not pay gets nothing, and means are found for letting it be known what is desired. The person who gives the largest gift gets the most service. Yet, as we have said, personal considerations continue to influence standards of production and distribution for a long time. This is illustrated by the very common custom by which labour is performed in simple associations: exchange of services between friends, or the free giving of the services of all in a community when an important work is to be done, as the building of a house or the making of a garden. Personal considerations are particularly likely to be invoked when the distress or suffering of some member of a group has rendered acute the sympathies of the others. The experience of some groups has taught them to provide for such contingencies in advance, by putting aside a part of the harvest for the needy. In almost all groups the

more fortunate will, in times of necessity, share with their neighbours who have less. Such practices as these are familiar to us to-day ; we are here on the border line of charity.

In the payment for professional services, too, the standard of performance according to ability and the receipt of service according to need prevails to some extent for a long time. Even when definite fees set either by custom or by bargaining have supplanted gifts as the method of payment for professional services, free gifts often continue to accompany the fees, expressions of gratitude on the part of the person benefited, according to his ability to give. Indeed this same custom may be found to-day. Among ourselves some physicians regard it as an ideal to charge according to their patients' assumed ability to pay ; and the free gift idea finds expression in the not unusual practice by which a man remembers in his will the physician, lawyer or clergyman long connected with the family.

It should be observed, however, that in all these cases where the exchanges effected are in appreciable degree unequal in utility there has been already existent a feeling of family affection, or friendship or sympathy has been aroused by some special calamity. Further, these cases presuppose that needs and abilities are known. This is true both of primitive and present-day society. Yet the ideal of production according to ability and distribution according to need is so obviously in accordance with one's conception of a perfect social relationship that it is in some cases insisted on when its expression is manifestly

impossible. Thus in its guise or name other less aspiring criteria of distribution may be covertly introduced.

*The criterion of status.* The most insidious form in which the criterion of production and distribution according to ability and need tries to continue itself or establish itself is in the form of the criterion of status. Sometimes it is overlooked entirely that status is the real standard actually set up, and very often, certainly, the claim is made that status itself represents need, or at least is equally just as the standard by which reward should be given.

We first perceive the criterion of status in cases where the small family has begun to expand so as to include, let us say, all the descendants of a common ancestor in the male or female line. In this enlarged group it is so difficult both physically and morally to apportion duties and give rewards strictly in accordance with ability and need that another and easier criterion is not slow in arising. Status in the case of the family is usually position accorded to ancestry and age. So we see, for instance, a higher regard extended to the oldest living male ancestor, or the oldest living female ancestor, or both, a regard by which they profit not only because of their merit but because of their position in itself. Of such services as are really disagreeable they will be given less than they are able to perform, and in the apportionment of advantages they will be equally favoured; while to others of lower status falls a proportionately larger share of duties and a smaller share of rewards. In fact, when the criterion of status has once appeared it is likely to affect the position not only of the

oldest and the youngest but of every member of the family group. It becomes the decisive factor in important decisions affecting the welfare of these members, and all must submit to it. It is, of course, more or less of a makeshift to settle difficulties and dispense justice as the size of the family group grows more unwieldy, and at the same time preserves the illusion of being somehow intrinsically right; for, as we have said, it is usually accepted as quite as just as the criterion it supplants, and, when once established, even to question its validity may be regarded as a heinous sin.

In the same way a certain conventional social status was often held to attach to certain professions in primitive society, as it does to some extent among ourselves, and payment for these services was in large measure estimated in terms of the social position of the performer. A rush of applicants into such socially favoured positions was prevented by the fact they were likely to be hereditary or otherwise difficult of access. The same principle holds at the lower end of the scale. A person of poor social status got a small reward no matter what his service was, simply because social status was held to be a fitting method of deciding economic remuneration.

Of course, as we have implied, the transition from the criterion of ability and need to that of utility did not necessarily proceed by way of status. Status was not important in all primitive societies. They differed in this as in other things. Of course, too, reward according to status and status alone could never survive as the sole standard of payment when there was any considerable sale

of services. It was too costly from an economic point of view. None the less, even when in the main superseded by the standard of reward according to production objectively measured it continued to influence distribution for a long time. Even to-day, as we shall show, it exercises a covert influence, again under its old disguise of need.<sup>1</sup>

*Relation to modern wage theory.* In present-day discussions of the principle on which wages should be based much emphasis is laid on the personal element in labour. Labour is not a commodity or an article of commerce, the Clayton Act tells us. Many writers assert that a matter in which the welfare of human beings is concerned should not be left to the determination of the "blind forces" of the market. Men cannot be treated as chattels. Too much is at stake.

If the payment for labour is not to-day to be determined by objective considerations, by the market decision of what a man produces, how is it to be determined? The best known definitions of this ideal standard put it in terms of a living wage. A man should receive what he needs for his welfare; for his health and decency; to enable him to live a self-respecting life. The most famous statement, so far as a minimum wage is concerned, is that of Mr. Justice Higgins of the Commonwealth Court of Australia: "the

<sup>1</sup> We should not expect to find the criterion of status prevailing as the standard of equivalence in the exchange of gifts or of goods. It is certainly not important there. Yet an anthropologist in Yap noted that prices were in part dependent on the station of the parties who had goods to sell. One paid more if he bought from a person of high rank, an old person or a woman, Müller, W., 133.

normal needs of an average employee regarded as a human being living in a civilized community."

It is not our purpose here to discuss the justice or injustice of the general theory of wage payment by the standard of a living wage.<sup>1</sup> What we wish to point out is simply that the standard of a living wage is not a standard of need. Primitive society had to abandon the standard of need as exchange relations extended. Even if it wished it did not know enough to keep it up. As we have seen, it changed in some cases to an objective standard, and in some cases to a standard of reward according to status, which it still continued to regard as equally just.

As a matter of fact the modern standard of need, as expressed, for example, in determinations of what minimum wages should be, is a standard of status simply. What a man's needs are we do not know. To set them in anything other than merely physical terms, in terms of calories, is a matter of opinion of class. A man's real needs as a human being may be very much more or very much less than what opinion presents as this class standard. Standards of living are standards of status, the goods and services required to maintain a certain position as a member of a class, standards of the needs of status, to be sure, but not standards in any sense of the needs of men as individuals, as human beings. Under the head of standards of living the old criterion of status is re-introduced and interpreted as the ideal criterion of need.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 151.

# PART IV

## THE EXPANSION OF TRADE

### CHAPTER VII

#### SOURCES OF THE MARKET

Theories of the origin of the market  
Exchange as a social institution  
    Gift giving at assemblies and exchange at markets  
    Exchange and travel expeditions  
    The motives that lead men afield  
The relation of trade and war  
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### CHAPTER VIII

#### THE EXTENSION OF THE MARKET AND ITS EFFECT ON PRICE SETTING

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### CHAPTER IX

#### THE LIBERATION OF VALUE

The attainment of economic rationality through experience  
The attainment of experience through economic rationality  
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## CHAPTER VII

### SOURCES OF THE MARKET

#### *Theories of the Origin of the Market*

IN the past an accepted tradition as to the origin of the market has been that the market began in so-called outer exchange between hostile tribes. A general state of inter-tribal hostility is assumed to prevail. One hostile tribe produces something desired by another. At first the one makes war on the other for the articles it wishes. The manifest advantages, however, of securing the desired goods without the necessity of warlike relations leads, at a later stage, to the rational development of a peaceable or quasi-peaceable intercourse. The form of intercourse varies with conditions. If one group is much stronger than the other, the first may simply demand tribute. Under other circumstances the so-called invisible or silent trade may appear: goods are left by one group at a certain spot and later taken away by the other group, which places different goods in recompense. The silent trade, according to one authority, is likely to be the form the intercourse takes when the parties are of a different cultural status, as between an agricultural and a forest-

dwelling people, who cannot meet on common boundaries and trade as approximate equals.<sup>1</sup> Again, a regular market may be set up on the neutral ground between two peoples, and trade be carried on at appointed times with armed forces standing guard. Still, again, the institution of guest friendship may arise and trade take place between specially appointed persons on each side, who act for their groups. According to some theorists, even according to some of the later ones, it was economic desires or needs which gave the stimulus to all considerable social intercourse,<sup>2</sup> and the social features of primitive trade would be explained as a comparatively late addition to a relationship fundamentally economic. The significance of such a theory in relation to the facts of the silent trade, armed markets and guest friendship we shall take up later in the chapter.

In accordance with our general proposition of the comparatively slow development of economic reasoning we should expect this sort of trade to arise relatively late. We should expect the new interests that would lead to trade to be acquired by degrees, and trade itself to develop by degrees likewise. The intellect, as we have pointed out, does not act until it has been surrounded by data on which to act. Almost all reasoning is a re-combination of familiar ideas. Without material which it may use to furnish precedents the intellect is unable to bridge gaps which *ex post facto* seem very narrow, or to draw the simplest correlations.

We have already spoken of what we believed to be the fundamentally social nature of men. This certainly would

<sup>1</sup> Schmidt, *Wirtschaftsprozess*, 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

furnish the best sort of a background on which trade could arise. In the preceding chapter we have noted that a sense of objective valuation grew out of the exchange of gifts; it is in the gradual extension of the exchange of gifts that we look for the development of the market. In the drive, the will to live, particularly in its aspect of will to learn, discover and explore, is provided the impetus that originally sent men afield and made these extended relations possible.

An accumulating body of material from anthropological sources lends support to our conclusions. In the light of the facts it is difficult, not to say impossible, to explain all early trade as an outgrowth of originally hostile relations. In the first place, some tribes, at least, appear to have engaged in no wars with others. In the second place, early wars seem to have been but rarely for economic purposes. In the third place, the character of much of the earliest exchanges shows a social motive clearly predominating over the economic.

It has been customary to consider the exchanges that took place within the tribe or group as relatively unimportant in the development of the market, and, indeed, if the hostility theory of the market is accepted this internal friendly exchange is beside the point. To us, of course, friendly exchange within the group is the germ from which all else springs. Gifts to natural brothers precede gifts to "blood" brothers; gifts to friends precede gifts to guest friends; and the distribution of food and presents at feasts and social ceremonies within the group precedes such distribution between groups.

*Exchange as a Social Institution*

*Gift giving at assemblies and exchange at markets.* In the foregoing chapter we have noted the great importance of gift giving in primitive society. If, however, this is the source of the market, it does not get the market very far. People must be brought together over long distances or in considerable numbers before exchange as a social institution can be said to be established. We must have voyages or assemblages whereby exchange may be extensively or intensively developed. We have referred incidentally to some of these assemblages in the preceding chapter. We must now point out the importance of such social intercourse in the growth of the institution of exchange.

We have already spoken of the practice in primitive society of giving gifts at ceremonies marking transition points in life. Sometimes these ceremonies are accompanied by a general exchange between the person giving the feast and all the guests. More often, however, the occasion for extended exchange is provided at social gatherings of a less intimately personal nature. In some of these cases a festivity is given by a particular individual, who distributes gifts to his guests. The guests in their turn entertain and reciprocate the favours which they have received.<sup>1</sup> In other cases the festival was a community affair, and all who came brought food or gifts and ex-

<sup>1</sup>Cf. for Pacific Islands, Hadfield, 46; Malinowski, *Baloma*, 377; *Torres Straits Reports*, II, 188; Williamson, *South Sea Savage*, 246, 253. For Nicobars (where guests bring gifts to the feast also) Solomon, 203-208; see also Kloss, 297. For more sophisticated examples cf. the potlatch on the North west Coast, Niblack, 362, 365, 366, and feasts in Mexico, Prescott, 84.

changed with others. The baloma or yearly festival in honour of the dead in the Trobriands requires that food be set forth daily for the spirits. After exposure for an hour or two the food is given away to a friend, who returns other food.<sup>1</sup> In the Nicobars the so-called feast of exhumation in memory of the dead is prepared for ten months in advance. All other villages are invited, and each individual must exchange with some special friend.<sup>2</sup>

The corroborrees of Southern Australia provide a peculiar illustration of gift exchange. These ceremonies are very important in the social life of these people. A messenger from one tribe is sent to neighbouring tribes to invite them to assemble at a certain time and place. When they come they bring with them the native products of their districts. The assembly lasts about three days. The first day is given up to distribution of presents and exchange, the latter two to games and feasting.<sup>3</sup> Among the tribes of Southeast Australia several sorts of social or mystic ceremonies are made an occasion for the exchange of goods.<sup>4</sup> As we have already seen, the churinga ceremonies of Central Australia had an exchange significance.<sup>5</sup>

Similar to the Australian corroborrees was the Solevu or Great Presentation among the Fijians, a ceremony of which we have spoken already. It took place either between unequals, in which case the presentation was on one side only; or between equals, when it was a matter of simple exchange.<sup>6</sup>

Sometimes the ceremony of exchange was a formality at

<sup>1</sup> Malinowski, *Baloma*, 378.    <sup>2</sup> Kloss, 286-293.    <sup>3</sup> Stanbridge, 295, 279.

<sup>4</sup> Howitt, *Native Tribes*, 715, ff.    <sup>5</sup> P. 101.    <sup>6</sup> Thomson, *Fijians*, 281.

which the offerings of each side were defined by custom. The Todas and the Kotas of India go through such a ceremony once a year, one side bringing grain and the other clarified butter.<sup>1</sup>

The transition from such festivities as these to true markets was a short one. In parts of German New Guinea, according to Neuhauss, the beginning of the market is a feast at which a division of pigs takes place. The "buyer" is obliged to take the pigs allotted to him and make a suitable return.<sup>2</sup> In British North Borneo there are two sorts of markets, the smaller being mainly social and cock-fighting, and only the larger representing a place for real business. In the Congo markets have been a famous social institution for a long time.<sup>3</sup> Among the Bakongo it is said "as in Ireland, everybody goes to market whether he has anything to buy or sell or not. All talk, nobody listens."<sup>4</sup> The same social feature prevails among the Akikingu of British East Africa.<sup>5</sup>

It is said that the ancient German did a large part of his trading at religious festivals, held both for cult and trade, of which the latter alone survived.<sup>6</sup> In the Solomon Islands, in those parts where there are no markets, the practice of the people is to let their wishes for trade be known at a funeral, assembly or feast.<sup>7</sup>

*Exchange and travel expeditions.* We have said that before exchange could be established as a social institution social relations must be developed intensively or ex-

<sup>1</sup> Rivers, *Todas*, 638, 639.

<sup>2</sup> Neuhauss, I, 369.

<sup>3</sup> Cureau, 249.

<sup>4</sup> Ward, H., 294.

<sup>5</sup> Routledge, 105.

<sup>6</sup> Gunmere, 213.

<sup>7</sup> Thurnwald, 37.

tensively. We have just seen some examples of that intensive development. We have now to note cases where exchange took place in connection with voyages and travel.

We have spoken of the practice in primitive society of giving gifts to guests or strangers, and in the preceding chapter we remarked it among the Samoans. In Samoa, however, it was in some instances apparently more than an incident of visiting. The explorer Wilkes tells us that it was the custom of the Samoans, when their crops were used up, to make long journeys to neighbouring groups whose storehouses were less depleted. They were absent from home as long as three months in some cases. They took with them the natural products of their districts and the work of their own industry, by means of which they made gifts to their hosts. Their hosts in turn made gifts to them.<sup>1</sup>

Gift giving on such voyages is often hardly different from trade. The Andaman Islanders, one of the most primitive people existing, are very hospitable, and visits are made an occasion for the exchange of the staples of the districts.<sup>2</sup> In 1875, when the Andamanese were very little known, Woi, a member of a party which came from the interior of Great Andaman, made the following statement with regard to their gift and trade practices :

“We all live for several months together in our own village and then we go to the coast people for a dance. When we make a trip for this purpose we always take with us some things for bartering,

<sup>1</sup> Wilkes, II, 148, 149.

<sup>2</sup> Man, *Aboriginal Inhabitants*, 328, 389, 392.

viz.: pork, red paint, made with pigs' fat, wooden-headed arrows, baskets, small net work bags . . .

"On our arrival we first, according to custom, sing and dance, after which we barter all our things, and then some of us go with some of the coast people in their boats in order to witness their skill at spearing . . . The rest of us accompany their friends among the coast people at pig hunting. After a few days we pack up the things we have received in exchange from the coast people, such as pigs, arrows, iron, knives, adzes, bottles, red paint made with pigs' fat, shells, etc."<sup>1</sup>

The illustration before given of the Australian corroborees could perhaps equally well be classed with travel expeditions. At any rate it is said that the Australians have a custom called the walk-about, part of the great trading system of the country. The native who wishes a rest or a change of scene starts out along one of the ancient trade routes, and may be gone as much as a year, bartering and enjoying social intercourse with men of other tribes. Corroborees often take place in connection with the walk-about.<sup>2</sup>

The Eskimos have a similar custom. They are great travellers and travel apparently for pure love of it, though they transact exchange on their journeys.<sup>3</sup>

In the following case the object sought in exchange is an important article of diet, so the predominating motive is probably economic. Every year at the end of September when winds were favourable the Motu of British New Guinea loaded their canoes with pots and ornaments which had been made during the year preceding,

<sup>1</sup> Man, *Andamanese Objects*, 280. <sup>2</sup> Roth, W. E. *Studies*, 132. <sup>3</sup> Bilby, 63.



and set sail for the Papuan Gulf. Not only did the greatest amount of religious formality and taboo accompany preparations for the voyage, but the reception by the hosts was definitely social, and a supplementary social exchange also took place. Each man of the crew chose a friend among the hosts and adorned him with certain ornaments. If the host wished to keep these he paid the recognized price. The guests remained some days, celebrating and feasting.<sup>1</sup>

There was an excessive amount of social ceremonial accompanying trade on the northwest coast of North America.<sup>2</sup> It often proved most irritating to white men, who wanted to get down to business and have it over. Ceremonies attending trade in the early days of intercourse between Europeans and Indians, says Niblack, really differed very little from ordinary social ceremonies of welcome. "The time thus spent by the Indians in dancing, singing, etc., was a source of great annoyance to the traders, who were generally eager to transact their business and seek other villages while the good season lasted."<sup>3</sup>

*The motives that lead men afield.* These illustrations and those of the preceding chapter have shown how important in fact have been men's social proclivities as a background for exchange. A natural sociality, however, without a drive would not get men very far. The motive that brought them to their feasts and assemblages does not appear to have been an ulterior one. It was rather,

<sup>1</sup> Seligmann, *Melanesians*, Ch. VIII.

<sup>2</sup> Dixon, *Geo.*, 242, 243; Portlock, 282, 283.

<sup>3</sup> Niblack, 374.

we should say, the urge to experience, which association with others made possible.

When men went forth on trading voyages the motive might be a need of sustenance. The Samoans, as we saw, set out when they had used up their harvest, although they "traded" on these journeys in other than edible goods. So the Papuans made their voyage to obtain sago. In other cases the motive for the voyage was undoubtedly that same urge to experience, either through association with other men or through the acquaintance with new scenes and the endurance of new trials which such voyages brought about.

Thus the advantages of general exchange were learned and when they were learned they easily became motives in themselves. In some cases it is hard to tell whether economic relations grew out of social ones or whether social and ceremonial observances were added to a relationship primarily economic in purpose. The European fair, for instance, starting, it would seem, with a large social or religious significance, grew to be primarily economic and now survives primarily as a festival. In other cases economic institutions and social ceremonials may arise independently and be combined.<sup>1</sup> In any case, however, the advantages of general exchange were not perceived until somehow or sometime they were learned by experience.

<sup>1</sup>This would seem to be the explanation of a custom in Kusae, one of the Carolines. The neighbours who build a house for a man bring a share of the food for the feast, and gifts besides. The host also provides gifts and re-distributes the whole, so that each guest and worker receives something more than he brought. Thus is accomplished the triple purpose of social festivity, exchange, and payment for carpenters' labour. Sarfert, 217.

*The Relation of Trade and War*

We must now say a word about those cases where the claim may be made that exchange develops out of war. The institutions of guest friendship, of armed markets and of the silent trade, as we have pointed out, may all be adduced as indications of the rationalized rise of trade to supersede predatory relationships.

*Extent of wars.* In the first place let us consider the extensiveness of primitive hostility. We have said that not all primitive peoples are normally hostile to their neighbours. Feuds due to a desire for private revenge, however, are common, and are frequently interpreted as a state of warfare. In the Hobhouse study of the Institutions of the Simpler Peoples it is said :

“The question has been raised whether the traditional view of early society as one of constant warfare is really justified by the facts. There is, in fact, no doubt that to speak of a state of war as normal is in general a gross exaggeration. Relations between neighbouring communities are in general friendly, but they are apt to be interrupted by charges of murder owing to the belief in witchcraft, and feuds result which may take a more or less organized form. In the lower stages it is in fact not very easy to distinguish between private retaliation when exercised by a kinsfolk or a body of friends, and a war which is perhaps organized by a leader chosen for the occasion, followed by a party of volunteers. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

*Motives to war.* Among the lower hunters “most fighting . . . is a matter of blood revenge in which honour is satisfied by the slaying of one or two of the enemy in

<sup>1</sup> Hobhouse, Wheeler, and Ginsberg, 228.

hot blood,"<sup>1</sup> and even where war was customary and organized its causes were most frequently emulation or revenge. This is notably true of the North American Indians and of the Australians.<sup>2</sup> Frequently women and children, and in some cases men, were made captive or adopted<sup>3</sup> and booty might or might not be taken, but it is difficult to find cases of wars in primitive society undertaken for an economic purpose. Even where booty was ostensibly the cause of war, as in the case of the fighting for horses of the Plains Indians, the real object was probably not the horses, for it was frequently easier to capture and tame wild ones, but the glory of taking horses from their neighbours.

The old theory that since population presses on means of subsistence a tribe must necessarily be hostile to its neighbours, whom it regards as potential consumers of its own means of life, is now largely superseded. A recent student of population has shown what a very large part is played by artificial restraints in the lives of even the most primitive peoples.<sup>4</sup> The old idea that every tribe was chiefly stomachs and mouths hungry for their neighbours' meat is better illustrated by certain modern examples than it is by primitive ones.

### *The Institution of Guest Friendship*

The institutions of guest friendship, blood brotherhood and similar relationships have been assumed to afford a rational escape from the implications of complete hostility

<sup>1</sup> Hobhouse, Wheeler, and Ginsberg, 233.      <sup>2</sup> Cf. Curr, I, 86.

<sup>3</sup> See table, Hobhouse, Wheeler, and Ginsberg, 232.

<sup>4</sup> Carr-Saunders, A.M., *The Population Problem*, Oxford, 1922.

between tribes, since the guest friends were able to carry on economic transactions both on their own account and as intermediaries for their neighbours. It is certainly true that in many cases they actually do this, but whether that was the cause of the institution is another question.

In the first place, however easy it is for different tribes as such to entertain hostile feelings toward each other, it is not easy for unprejudiced individuals of those tribes to keep up this attitude as a matter of course when they are thrown together under circumstances which encourage any degree of intimacy.<sup>1</sup> In so far as a man is an individual and not a mere member of a group he will see that however natural or even advantageous group hostility may be, the question of the relationship of individuals to each other must in the last analysis be determined according to what the individuals themselves are. Consequently it is easy enough for individuals of different tribes to be friends if they are placed in any circumstances that enable them really to show each other their individualities. Such circumstances are afforded in primitive life in various ways. For instance, a member of one tribe is lost and is taken in by another. In their travels from place to place individuals who pass through an enemy's country are often welcomed, though abuse of the privilege will bring about its hasty abrogation. In speaking of guest friendship, Grierson observes :

“In the early stages of this novel relation, the stranger is still regarded as an enemy but is treated as a friend for a limited time and for a specific pur-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 28-29.

pose. He can count, at the least, upon food and shelter, and protection, so long as he is actually in residence with his host. In some cases, he can prolong his stay as long as he likes; in other cases, he must bring it to a close on the expiry of a fixed period. Sometimes his entertainer protects him, even after his departure, by escorting him to the next village, or by providing him with a token which will ensure his friendly reception. Not infrequently this relation is indicated by an exchange of names, or by some such ceremony as that of blood brotherhood. We find, however, instances in which it does not cease on the death of the original parties to it. Further, in many cases the stranger is treated by his protector's tribe as its protégé; and, in this attitude of a community towards an individual, we see the beginnings of that public hospitality which forms a marked feature in the life of classical antiquity. Lastly it is to be observed, that to refuse hospitality is generally regarded by public opinion as blameworthy, and is, in some cases, punishable by law."<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing more likely than that individuals who have formed such bonds of friendship should exchange gifts, for themselves and for their friends also; and they are the logical ones to lead in the development of further friendly relationships, such as trade, between their respective tribes. That the social relationship is considered the basis of the economic one is indicated in the case of one of the early Spanish navigators to the Straits of Magellan, who found he could not barter with an Indian chief until the ceremony of blood brotherhood had been performed between them.<sup>2</sup> In another case, this time in Vancouver, a refusal to trade appeared to be a social insult.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Grierson, 84, 85.

<sup>2</sup> Markham, *Spanish Voyages*, 121.    <sup>3</sup> Belcher, I, 111.

A striking example of guest friendship fundamentally non-economic is the Kula partnership of the Trobriands.<sup>1</sup> This is based on a fixed and permanent status which binds into couples some thousands of individuals differing in language, culture, and even race;<sup>2</sup> the Kula partners are friends, although the normal condition of two different tribes is hostile.<sup>3</sup> The economic mechanism is a specific form of credit implying a high degree of mutual trust and commercial honour.<sup>4</sup> The route of the Kula lies among a circle of islands north and east of the east end of New Guinea inhabited by different tribes. Along this route in one direction move necklaces of red shell, and in the other direction bracelets of white shell. These ornaments are not sold, but are passed from one partner to another to be held by him for an unspecified length of time, not too long or he would be accused of being niggardly. An armshell sent in one direction is exchanged for an necklace sent in the other, but there is no question of barter in the transaction; the matter is one of noblesse oblige. The ceremony is chiefly of ritual significance, for although these shell ornaments are used somewhat, their primary purpose is to bring social distinction. Ninety per cent of the armshells are too small to be worn.<sup>5</sup> The Kula is "rooted in myth, backed by traditional law, and surrounded with magical rites."<sup>6</sup>

In connection with the Kula, however, real economic

<sup>1</sup> Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* deals almost exclusively with this ceremony and its implications.

<sup>2</sup> Malinowski, *Argonauts*, 85.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.    <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 85, 86.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 81-96.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

exchange does take place. The partners themselves exchange gifts only, but an ordinary trade is carried on at the same time between those not partners, by means of intermediaries. A definite gain is obtained by the middlemen.<sup>1</sup> "The whole tribal life is permeated by a constant give and take,"<sup>2</sup> yet the foundation of the give and take is non-economic.<sup>3</sup>

It is true, however, that guest friendship may become standardized, and in this case it does take on the aspect of a deliberate attempt to encourage trade. In German New Guinea, for instance, it is said, though the observation may rest on a pre-determined judgment, that there would probably be no intercourse at all if it were not for exchange,<sup>4</sup> and certain individuals are sent as children to live with other tribes in order that they may learn the language, serve as interpreters, and become trade friends.<sup>5</sup> In South Australia, too, the ngia-ngiampe relation necessitated the institution of recognised agents for inter-tribal trade.<sup>6</sup>

### *Exchange on a Hostile Background*

In the various cases where exchange is carried on in connection with war or in truces between battles, it is quite as easy to account for the trade as the beginning of a

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 362-364.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>3</sup> A custom perhaps bearing some resemblance to the Kula is found among certain Brazil Indians who have no general trade, yet practice an exchange of arrows. Schmidt declares that this arrow exchange is without trade significance, and, as he upholds the hostility theory of the origin of the market, he adds that it is not a precedent of trade either, a claim which would seem difficult to substantiate. Schmidt, *Wirtschaftsprozess*, 137.

<sup>4</sup> Neuhauss, 367.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 366.

<sup>6</sup> Woods, 259.



friendly traffic for articles the use of which is learned incidentally from hostile intercourse, as to account for it as a hostile traffic superseding war instituted for economic purposes. Thus in New Zealand during armistices the opponents used to meet and engage in an exchange of war articles. Sometimes it is said war ceased as a consequence of the friendliness thus engendered ; at other times it was made worse through the quarrels that ensued.<sup>1</sup> The Plate Indians fought and trafficked alternately, giving bows and arrows for canoes.<sup>2</sup> Fighting may lead to trafficking or trafficking to fighting. The Australian corroborrees, friendly festivals, frequently ended in fights.<sup>3</sup> Disputes over articles may make wars worse but are not the real causes of war.

As we have seen in Chapter III the use of goods must be learned before the goods will be sought. If hard pressed for sustenance, men will make war on other men in order to get the physical necessities of life, but the advantages of anything more than physical necessities are not self evident : such knowledge must be acquired.

The intercourse of wars furnishes an opportunity for this. It is reasonable to suppose that through wars instituted for revenge or ambition one tribe often came to learn the advantages of the material products of another. Plunder may be incidental to war, if not the cause of it. Frequently, too, a friendly exchange takes place at peace-making. Kroeber gives an interesting sidelight on the economic features of wars among the Indians of North-west California. On peace-making it was the custom for

<sup>1</sup> Polack, II, 12, 13.    <sup>2</sup> Schmidt and De Vaca, 193.    <sup>3</sup> Stanbridge, 297.

each side to pay for persons and property destroyed. The larger economic burden, of course, fell on the victors.<sup>1</sup> Since each side paid presumably in its own products, a desire for continued exchange might originate through such means as this. Among the Louisiana Indians, when one group was attacked by another, the group attacked might send a protesting expedition to the attacking tribe, and receive presents from them to pay for the wrong that had been committed.<sup>2</sup> Presents were given also at peace-making.<sup>3</sup> This is true, too, of peace-making ceremonies among South African tribes.<sup>4</sup>

To show that economic interests may be learned incidentally from wars carried on for other than economic purposes is quite different, however, from claiming that exchange develops from economic wars. When economic interests have been extended, as through the exchange of gifts at peace-making, the market may grow out of peace-making assemblages, as we saw it could grow out of other assemblages where goods were exchanged; the economic motives, once acquired, taking precedence of others.

In other cases, as when the uses of new goods were learned through plunder, it is of course quite possible that the desire for these new goods did lead to a real reasoned development of trade. We are by no means arguing that primitive man did not reason, only that his background of experience was slight. If he had already learned the advantages of exchange through intercourse within his own tribe or with friendly tribes, he had a basis for reason-

<sup>1</sup> Kroeber, *Types*, 88.    <sup>2</sup> Quoted in Swanton, 128.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>4</sup> MacDonald, James, *South Africa*, 133.

ing that exchange with hostile tribes would be more sensible than plunder.

The existence of markets on neutral ground as in British North Borneo<sup>1</sup> and under the protection of a fetish as among the Ba-Mbala<sup>2</sup> or bartering carried on by women while men stand guard in the background, as in the Solomons,<sup>3</sup> and other similar cases thus offer no opposition to our main thesis. The intercourse of war is one of the ways in which new interests are extended, and a knowledge of the advantages of exchange once learned through peaceful relations with others will eventually be applied to hostile relations also.

### *The Silent Trade*

The most curious of all forms of trade is probably the silent trade, to which we have already referred. It is or has been found all over the world<sup>4</sup> and is frequently adduced as proof of the claim that the market has a hostile origin.

The most striking common characteristic of the examples of the silent trade known to us is, in the words of Grierson : "In far the larger number of reported cases one of the parties represents a relatively high, the other a relatively low, type of culture."<sup>5</sup> This makes it easy to accept the conclusion implied by Schmidt and already mentioned : the reason for the adoption of secrecy and silence was that the trading parties had little in common ; they could meet neither as equal friends in peaceful trade nor as equal

<sup>1</sup> Evans, *Studies*, 130. <sup>2</sup> Torday and Joyce, *Ba-Mbala*, 408. <sup>3</sup> Woodford, 43.

<sup>4</sup> Grierson, 41, 42.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 63, 64.

enemies in an armed market. There was nothing to be gained by open intercourse and perhaps much to be lost. This was especially true when the culturally higher party habitually sought slaves among the people of the culturally lower party.

In cases where the cultures were not dissimilar the custom may have been connected with inability to use each other's language. We have, for instance, some cases which are on the border line between silent and regular trade. In German New Guinea the Siassi islanders on their way back from trade in the Southeast stop yearly to traffic with the Jabim. The Jabim bring their goods to the shore and hold up what they want to exchange. The Siassi do the same from their boat. If, however, the Jabim knows a few words of the Siassi language the trade is made direct and in person.<sup>1</sup>

In other cases of the many collected by Grierson<sup>2</sup> the silent trade looks to be mainly a matter of convenience: one trading party had no means of knowing when the other would pass along its regular route and left its goods exposed rather than wait.

In still other cases the silent trade appears to be simply an illustration of the provincial spirit in dealing with foreigners. Here the parties usually represent a relatively high degree of culture. Economic motives have been learned, but economic desires conflict with dislike of foreigners, and the silent trade is a compromise. The prejudice of the Chinese against outside influences is well known. Both Pomponius Mela and the elder Pliny tell us

<sup>1</sup>Neuhauss, III, 315.

<sup>2</sup>Grierson, 41-54.

that the silent trade was their method of trafficking with the West.<sup>1</sup>

In any case the facts of the silent trade offer no new argument for a hostile origin of the market. The explanations in our preceding section would account for all examples known. The silent trade is so peculiar and so interesting that it has undoubtedly received relatively more attention than it deserves in theories of the origin of the market. Travellers note instances of the silent trade and say nothing about regular trade, which later investigation proves to be an ordinary institution of the same peoples.

### *The Acquisition of the Propensity to Barter*

What most stands out in our discussion of sources of the market is that not only is there no evidence for economic rationality in advance of experience but, contrary to Adam Smith, there was no "natural propensity to barter" among primitive peoples. Economic rationality was learned and barter was a part of it. What was natural was a display of friendliness, expressed, among other ways, by gift-giving. As desire to taste life more fully led men afield, this gift-giving assumed special importance at festivities of one sort or another, which in some cases came to take on the aspect of markets. So, too, as economic desires increased, voyages undertaken because of necessity or for the sake of adventure were transformed into general trading voyages. As we should expect, early markets and early trading voyages for a long time retained their social and ceremonial features.

<sup>1</sup> References in Yule, I, 196, 209: Pomponius Mela, III, 7; Pliny, N. H., VI, 24.

When the economic motive or desire for goods was once awakened, however, it might lead to wars, and out of the wars might grow a reasoned trade. More often, the connection of war and trade is otherwise to be explained. The frequent truces in wars afforded an opportunity for the two sides to get acquainted with each other's products and carry on a certain amount of exchange. Peace-making also gave occasion for the exchange of presents. Armed markets might be either an outgrowth of exchange learned from war, or the arms might be a protection assumed by nominally friendly tribes, since even friendly exchange frequently ended in quarrels.

We who have learned economic motives from the long experience of preceding generations develop trade directly from those motives,<sup>1</sup> but the deliberate cultivation of trade for the purpose of the exchange of goods is very rare, though not entirely absent, in primitive society.

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the importance of economic and other motives in trade in mediaeval and early modern society reference should be made to Sombart's *Der Moderne Capitalismus* and to the *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* and the *Wirtschaftsgeschichte* of Max Weber.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE EXTENSION OF THE MARKET AND ITS EFFECT ON PRICE SETTING

#### *Is there an Evolution in Norms of Price Setting?*

THERE is always a temptation to present any historical development in terms of stages through which it is assumed all cases of that development have passed or will pass. In our first chapter we sounded a note of warning against this practice and pointed out that the only stages that mean anything are stages that have their basis in men's mentality; and that even this mental development presents different aspects among different peoples, according to the various outside contacts that influence men. To present as absolute a series of stages because they have actually succeeded one another in certain countries of Europe is, therefore, absurd.

In particular there has been an effort to trace an evolution in norms of price setting, and some writers have related this evolution to stages of social development in general. The first stage is usually said to be the stage of force or trickery. From this prices pass to a stage where they are regulated by custom or arbitrary governmental

fiat. The stage of competition succeeds to this, and, according to some writers, competition must in turn be superseded by a fourth and different stage, that of social justice secured by law.

Such a series we must reject at once. But can no general statements be made of "stages" through which price setting passes?

In the first place, let us clear up a difficulty that attaches to the meaning of the word custom. A so-called customary price may imply two quite different things; or either of them alone. It may be a price set for protection, as a legal price is sometimes set. It is, of course, less amenable to change with changing conditions than such a legal price, but its purpose is the same. On the other hand, a customary price may be simply any price preserved by inertia. Let us illustrate this. It should be observed that in the same societies we sometimes find competitive prices prevailing for some things and customary prices for others. In certain societies customary prices prevail for articles less important or less used, and competitive prices for necessities.<sup>1</sup> Here the customary price is obviously an inertia price, which the pressure of desire for economic advantage has been sufficient to supplant in the case of articles most necessary and most in demand. In other societies, however, most prices are competitive, but customary prices prevail for necessities or for goods which are purchased from outside the group. Here the customary price is primarily a protective price, and is comparable with legal price fixing for protection, as in our

<sup>1</sup> Danks, *Shell Money*, 317; Means, 13.



own price fixing of wheat and sugar during the late war. Thus it is clear that in speaking of a customary price the significance of the price must be explained. A protective price may be a "stage" enforced through difficulties brought about in a suddenly expanding market, but an inertia price represents no "stage" in any but a superficial sense. When one speaks of the Middle Ages as dominated by inertia as we by activity this may be true, but nothing inherent in the nature of price development is to be deduced from this circumstance.

To return, then, to our series. We saw in Chapter VI that there was a transition from a basis of equal good will to a basis of equal utility in exchanges. From this we expected the development of more or less definite sets of prices, as the market gave experience of margins. Traders could thus set their own valuations in accordance with valuations which had proved effective in the past. Sometimes this happened without interruption, and competition was established on a broad scale. But it is clear that where there is unlimited competition it is, other things equal, the unscrupulous who can profit most from it. As the market expands there expands with it opportunity for the use of force, trickery, and other forms of injustice. This danger may be so great that the development of competition is halted and protective prices are established by custom or law.

We may pass then from the good will standard (and perhaps a period of inertia) to individual bargaining (and perhaps a period of inertia) to either free competition or protective prices (and perhaps a period of inertia following

either of these.) Whether free competition or protection is set up as the standard in price setting at any given time with any given people depends on circumstances. In particular it depends, on the one hand, on how great is the market and how much confidence the traders have in one another ; and, on the other hand, how far the trading parties have learned to be acute in bargaining.

*Differences among Peoples in their Attitude toward  
Bargaining*

A disposition to bargain, an attitude favouring free competition, implies, in general, two things: desire of goods and pleasure in barter itself. These two things are not the same, though in modern life they mutually supplement each other. Neither, however, implies the other. Strong desires for economic goods usually lead, sooner or later, to pleasure in bargaining, but some peoples have learned very early to enjoy bargaining as a sort of game, while their economic interests are very limited. Thus propensity to bargain is no good index of economic progress.

It is, of course, impossible always to determine whether differences in attitude toward competition are due chiefly to the traditional attitude of the people—the social inheritance of the group—or to their immediate experience of the market. A few broad statements with regard to the social inheritance of certain peoples may, however, be made, and these will be sufficient to show us how cautious we must be in correlating free competition and economic progress,

There was very little gain spirit, or propensity to bargain either, among American Indians prior to the arrival of the whites. We have already made some reference to the non-economic character of their wars. Their trading expeditions were occasions for social intercourse and adventure. They regarded the attitude of the whites with scorn, and were confused by the injunctions of missionaries who tried to teach them to be decently prudent, or, as it seemed to them, to be greedy.

In one case, at any rate, that of the Incas, the Indians reached a highly developed industrial civilization apparently without competitive trade. They had no money or other circulating medium. Goods were dispensed and labour requisitioned according to the dictates of a central authority. All must work but all were provided for by a despotism more or less beneficent. Individualism was suppressed, or perhaps had never sought to lift its head. Yet their attainments in some respects can worthily be compared with our own.<sup>1</sup>

In striking contrast, however, to the Incas and other native Americans is the case of the Aztecs, as they were found on the arrival of Cortes. Here, as among the Incas, an economic civilization had been developed, but in this case love of trade was aroused likewise, and the position of merchant was the highest in the kingdom.

"That trade should prove the path to eminent political preferment in a nation but partially civilized, where the names of soldier and priest are usually the

<sup>1</sup> Markham, *Incas*; Pizarro, esp. 35. The extraordinary statesmanship of the Incas was, of course, largely responsible for their economic successes.

only titles to respect, is certainly an anomaly in history. It forms some contrast to the standard of more polished monarchies of the Old World."<sup>1</sup>

There were many market squares in the city of Mexico, a street for game, a street for herbs, houses like apothecaries' shops, places like barber shops, restaurants; and in the great central market, said Cortes, sixty thousand persons assembled daily.<sup>2</sup> There were, moreover, itinerant traders to the remotest borders of Anahuac and beyond, who went with caravans of stuffs, jewellery and slaves.<sup>3</sup>

In some parts of Africa, particularly in the Congo, we have still a different phenomenon. The general economic and social development is low. Love of bargaining for its own sake, however, has been aroused, and we have an extraordinary series of markets at which the keenest sort of competition is carried on.<sup>4</sup> Love of barter sometimes takes precedence even over love of goods. It is said of the people of the lower Congo that they will haggle half a day over a trifle and then give away more than half its value, and "while demanding heavy damages for the most trifling aggression they will almost ruin themselves with liberality rather than be thought mean."<sup>5</sup>

The little developed Ifugao of the Philippines were also great bargainers, especially in the old days.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prescott, 83, 84.

<sup>2</sup> MacNutt, 257, 258.

<sup>3</sup> Prescott, 83. As in the case of the Incas, the economic organization of the Aztecs cannot be understood without reference to their government.

<sup>4</sup> Partridge, 245; Torday and Joyce, *Ba-Huana*, 283; *Ba-Mbala*, 408; Weeks, *Bakongo*, 199.

<sup>5</sup> Phillips, 218.

<sup>6</sup> Barton, R. F., *Economics*, 427, 431; cf. Kroeber, *Philippines*, 155, 158.

Differences in propensity to bargain exist side by side in the same people. In both Melanesia and Polynesia some groups are great hagglers, while the majority are bound by inertia. Instances of keenness in competition are found in British North Borneo, where, as we saw in the Congo, love of barter may be stronger than love of goods;<sup>1</sup> in New Guinea;<sup>2</sup> Mala;<sup>3</sup> and the Solomons.<sup>4</sup> A missionary observer in New Britain and in Samoa points out a striking contrast among these peoples of similar race. The New Britishers had in many ways the most developed money economy to be found among primitive peoples, and even husband and wife were economic competitors.<sup>5</sup> Their language has words for buying, selling, lending, interest, pawning, to get on trust, security, extortionate, underselling, and a phrase meaning compelled to sell at a sacrifice. They had regular markets and trading expeditions on which various articles were bought and re-sold at a considerable profit.<sup>6</sup> The Samoans, on the other hand, had very little trade; we have seen to what a great extent gift exchange prevailed among them. During the American Civil War cotton was raised both in Samoa and New Britain. After the war the price fell. The Samoans refused to accept the lowered price, allowing the cotton to rot on the stalk. In New Britain, where the state of the market had always been recognised, adjustments were promptly made to the new

<sup>1</sup> Pryer, 230. <sup>2</sup> Guise, 212; Turner, W. Y., 488. <sup>3</sup> Coomb, 276.

<sup>4</sup> Codrington, *Melanesians*, 297. <sup>5</sup> Danks, *Shell Money*, 308; Brown, 309.

<sup>6</sup> Brown, 297. Cf. Bücher, 60. For other examples of re-sale at a profit among primitive peoples see Codrington, *Melanesians*, 297; Kloss, 308.

conditions.<sup>1</sup> This comparison is especially interesting because according to all ordinary standards the Samoans represent a higher degree of culture than the New Britishers.<sup>2</sup>

A great difference in attitude toward trade is said to exist also among the tribes of Australia.<sup>3</sup>

*Effect of intercourse with trading peoples.* Evidences of a competitive spirit before intercourse with more civilized peoples are, however, by no means so frequent as the evidences of trade due to that intercourse. People who have learned to trade through contact with the whites are soon able to apply their new accomplishment in their native circles. Often facility in bargaining among primitives is directly traceable to the contacts they have had with explorers, travellers, and traders from abroad. The North American Indians, for instance, soon learned to bargain. The chief Canassatego told his people they ought to demand more for skins when deer became scarcer, since scarcity was the argument of the whites for putting up their prices.<sup>4</sup> Other Indians have held regular councils to decide what prices they should demand from the whites in order to ensure themselves the benefits of market conditions.

<sup>1</sup> Brown, 296.

<sup>2</sup> Brown, 434. The New Britishers usually went entirely naked, *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>3</sup> Curr, I, 77, 78.

<sup>4</sup> Bartram, 357.

<sup>5</sup> Hunter, 302. An interesting story is told of the Sewees, a Sioux tribe of the Eastern United States. Fearing they were being cheated by the whites they got up a trading expedition to take their goods to England in canoes and secure better prices. They were persuaded England could not be so far away as the Englishmen represented. The expedition never delivered its goods. Mooney, 78, 79.

Bonacorsi, one of the first visitors to Tahiti, observes : " At first they were glad of any old white or red clout ; but by degrees, as they saw good pieces of cloth and shirts, they raised the prices of their wares " and became " exceedingly shrewd." The famous explorer, Perouse, who arrived at the Sandwich Islands somewhat later, found the people already accomplished barterers.<sup>1</sup>

We have noted the hospitality of the Samoans. Of late years, through knowledge of the customs of whites, some Samoans have come to think that visitors should pay almost to a cup of water, so a stranger may judge them as not friendly in the least.<sup>2</sup>

Even when a propensity to barter exists before, white intercourse may stimulate it. Livingstone observes of the Baganda that they had acquired such an exalted idea of the value of their products from intercourse with whites that they demanded payment of port traders for water, wood, and even grass.<sup>3</sup>

In those cases where the first white visitors find trade well established among primitive peoples, we have, of course, often no way of knowing whether this trade arose spontaneously among those peoples or whether it had been learned from outside contacts in the remote past. For instance, although markets have prevailed in the Congo so long as anyone can trace Congo history, the disposition to barter might originally have been acquired through contacts with ancient Egyptians and Carthaginians, who are known in some cases to have traded in remote portions of Africa.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Corney, II, 50.

<sup>2</sup> Perouse, I, 120.

<sup>3</sup> Turner, *Polynesia*, 199.

<sup>4</sup> Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, 351.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Kingsley, Chapter X.

This point should be noted. Although a civilization such as that of the Incas can grow up with no trade, or very little trade, special conditions are necessary for this. The Incas were well isolated, and the nearest tribes were some of the least developed in the world. When a non-trading people and a trading people meet, it is the former who adopt the methods of the latter. Hence although we cannot argue that civilization never arises without trade, we can argue that trade has always accompanied any considerable diffusion of civilization.

### *Protection*

*Freedom and insecurity.* It is quite clear that when two parties meet to bargain, one of which is stronger than the other, and no considerations of sympathy prevail between them, the prices asked by the stronger will be just as high as can be extorted and the prices paid by them will be equally low. Trade under these circumstances runs all the way from true tribute to cases where the weaker party's profit is only slightly less than that of the stronger. The bargains struck between groups hostile or neutral who meet only occasionally for trade are generally determined on the basis of arms or numbers. Ulrich Schmidt, an early visitor to the Indians of the Rio Plate, put the case quite neatly when he said he wished he could have got more from his barter with the Indians, but he dared not ask it because his party was so small.<sup>1</sup>

When the two trading parties are unequally matched in knowledge rather than in force, the less informed party

<sup>1</sup> Schmidt and De Vaca, 48,



suffers. The aborigine trading with a European for the first time is usually at his mercy in the matter of exchange values, and takes what is offered, if he takes it at all, at the trader's rate.<sup>1</sup>

In the same way, when any large development of trade takes place suddenly, one trading party, or, to make a modern analogy, one factor in production, may find itself at a considerable disadvantage because of weakness, ignorance, or lack of skill in bargaining. Free competition under such circumstances is no ideal way to trade, and the weaker party seeks some sort of protection. In primitive society a so-called customary price is frequently the reaction. The weaker party takes refuge in insisting on some more or less arbitrary price for the goods they offer, and refuse absolutely to give more than a certain arbitrary price for what they buy. The point is not necessarily that this arbitrary price is a good one, though it may be; but the feeling that they have a price, even though a poor one, is to give primitive traders a sense of confidence and assurance in their dealings, which is worth more to them than the fluctuating advantages of imperfect bargaining. Protective custom, an imperfect method of setting prices in itself, at least supplants a method that is worse. In protective customary prices we have the germ from which legal price setting grows.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cook, III, 634; Grey, I, 277; Weddell, 153. European visitors generally have been glad enough to take advantage of the natives' ignorance of the market. It is interesting to note, however, that Columbus on his first contact with the natives refused to allow his men to exchange broken glass and bits of barrel hoops for the goods brought to the ship by the Indians; to the end, he says, that they "may be made Christians." Young, 41.

*Insistence on prices first received from outsiders.* A good illustration of the tendency of primitives to insist on an arbitrary price when they are ignorant of the market is afforded by a circumstance to which various travellers testify: the pertinacity with which natives insist on the prices first received by them from outsiders. The Indians of the Northwest Coast, according to Niblack, are "expert traders" but anything once sold at a certain price must always bring the same.<sup>1</sup> In India, when a first exchange had arbitrarily been made at the rate of one chicken for a rupee the people insisted on regarding a chicken and a rupee as equivalents thereafter.<sup>2</sup> A traveller to Fiji and New Caledonia warns others that a native who has once received a certain price always expects that same price thereafter, so they must be careful not to give him too much.<sup>3</sup> In cases where the people fear that competition will bring them more disadvantages than advantages, such insistence is reasonable enough.

*Protective prices in general. Analogy with the wergild.* The protective price, however, may be an original reasonable price codified, as it were, by custom. When exchanges are made at a fixed rate, as they so often are in primitive markets, the customary price may be not so much arbitrary as it is a price which experience has already found tolerable and which it is thought better not to interfere with on the principle of let well enough alone. Where competition involves the exercise of force on one side or the other it may be better to do nothing to stimulate it.

The wergild is from one point of view an excellent

<sup>1</sup> Niblack, 337.    <sup>2</sup> Williams and Calvert, 74.    <sup>3</sup> Anderson, 192,

example of a protective customary price.<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps the clearest and most far-reaching illustration of a transition from competitive force pure and simple to a price enforced by custom that we have. It has its roots, to be sure, not in economics but in justice, yet it is quite comparable to our own practice of assessing damages for accidental death and injury. Custom sets the price to save revenge, or an equivalence that in this case would involve more bloodshed. For our purposes the significant point is the transition from wasteful contention to a customary payment made explicit often for all possible injuries in the greatest detail.

*Police interference to prevent injustice.* Of protective prices set by law—unless the wergild be called such—there are probably no instances in primitive society, owing to the slight development of law apart from custom. In fact the first conspicuous examples of definitely legal price fixing of which we know are the efforts of Diocletian in this direction. Where protection from the dangers of unlimited competition is needed, however, it may not be necessary to go so far as to set prices by custom or law: police oversight to prevent fraud may be sufficient.

As the germ of legal price fixing is found in the protective prices of custom, the germ of governmental efforts to prevent unjust competition is found in the institution of armed men to stand guard at markets. We have seen that armed men frequently stayed in the background while

<sup>1</sup> The wergild was particularly well developed in Africa. Some tribes, as the Bantu, provided for all conceivable injuries. Dundas, Charles, *Organization*, 272, 273, 279-283. For general discussion see Lowie, 402-404.

barter was going on. A step further is reached when definite officials are appointed to see that justice is secured. Such officials were found in the markets of Africa<sup>1</sup> and in Polynesia.<sup>2</sup> In Mexico there were not only officials but a market court of twelve judges for trying offenders.<sup>3</sup> The market officials are to be compared with the agoranomi of the Grecian cities and the aediles of Rome; while the market court of Mexico, of course, is comparable to the pie powder court of mediaeval European fairs.

Similar in spirit to this sort of protection is the requirement that publicity must attend all sales and contracts. The Itzas of Central America provided for this,<sup>4</sup> as did also the ancient Babylonians.<sup>5</sup>

By such means as these a more rational method of protection was provided than by arbitrary insistence on customary prices or the fixation of prices by law. Oversight of buying and selling and precautions against violence, fraud, and other forms of unfair advantage were provisions that struck at the cause of the difficulty rather than at its effect. These somewhat restricted competition but at the same time made it possible for it to go on without untoward results in an expanding market.

### *The Reaction of Competition and Protection on Each Other*

In our first section we pointed out that there was no evolution in norms of price setting in the ordinary sense. There may or may not be a "force" stage or a "custom"

<sup>1</sup> Cureau, 249; Routledge, 106. <sup>2</sup> Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, IV, 325.

<sup>3</sup> Prescott, 379. <sup>4</sup> Means, 13. <sup>5</sup> Johns, *Laws*, Ch. XXII.

stage in the development of prices. In our second section we showed how greatly different peoples differed in their attitude toward competition, according to their experience and their social inheritance: some of the least developed have practiced it and some of the most developed have scorned it. Having thus fortified ourself against the dangers of uncritical generalization, we may now ask again if no generalizations whatever can be made with regard to the development of standards of price setting.

The immediately preceding section on Protection has suggested such a generalization. Broadly speaking, periods of freedom and periods of protection succeed each other. Any considerable expansion, particularly a sudden one which people are unprepared for, brings so many dangers in its wake—so many opportunities for the strong to profit over the weak, the informed over the ignorant and the unscrupulous over the scrupulous—that the immediate reaction on the part of the sufferers is to secure for themselves some sort of protection. In its crudest form this results in insistence on an arbitrary price secured by custom, combination or law.<sup>1</sup> Much more rational than this are efforts which strike at the root of the trouble by preventing unfair advantage from the start; but also, of course, this sort of security is the most difficult to bring about.

Protections by custom and law, however necessary they may appear at their inception, sooner or later outlive their usefulness. With the advance of culture men become more able to compete on equal terms, and un-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. our analysis of the nature of the legal minimum wage, p. 112.

necessary protection checks their efforts. As knowledge spreads it becomes clearer that entirely apart from sentiment honesty is the best policy, and superfluous interference by law only chokes economic development. Yet society remains tied down for years or generations or for centuries.

How long it remains tied down depends on the strength of the vital force within it, the power of the drive in the individuals of whom it is composed. Eventually, however, when it has been checked or suppressed long enough, or, more usually, when it has been encouraged and stimulated by fresh contacts from outside, the drive bursts out, breaks down its barriers, demands freedom for its activity, and the whole process begins anew.

It will be seen, then, that there is a certain half truth underlying the series of force—custom—competition—social justice. Force and competition are from one point of view the same, the desire for unlimited activity. Protective custom and law are also two aspects of the same thing, the desire for security. It is true that these react and succeed each other, but not true that the stages are four rather than two or six or sixty.

At the same time it is true that the end is social justice, but not true that it is finally secured by law any more than by competition. The two stages or periods are the active and passive aspects of the same whole. The desire for freedom of activity and the necessity for security, the urge to experience the new and the obligation of preserving the old, the positive drive and the reaction for protection, these two things are always warring

against each other in the market as they are in every other department of man's life. Their succession to each other is a reaction, however, not in itself an evolution. The real evolution is brought about not by what the norm of price setting is at any stage, but in the degree to which, at any stage, protection is combined with freedom, or activity with security. The eventual triumph is not the success of one over the other, but the union of both.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The general argument of this chapter is to a certain degree supported by an article by H. Pirenne, *Stages in the Social History of Capitalism*, *American Historical Review*, XIX, 494. He shows that there was a series of interacting periods of economic freedom and economic regulation in Europe for the period from 1050 to the present day.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LIBERATION OF VALUE

#### *The Attainment of Economic Rationality through Experience*

AS we have traced the development of economic value through the increase of wants, the objectifying of wants and the expansion of trade we have seen that the process has been one of the gradual ascendancy of reason. This was brought about through the basis of information bestowed by culture. Everything had to be learned. On the one hand new materials for the intellect to use were passed down from generation to generation ; on the other hand, new materials were extended through new social contacts. The stimulus to activity was prior to intellect, and this activity first expressed itself roughly and unconsciously, though the capacity to reason was there. Information, experience, however, were necessary before the capacity could be utilized. If, therefore, the factors of moral will and native sagacity are left out of account, the question, Are men reasonable? has resolved itself into the second question, How much information have they got ?

It thus appears that the psychologists are right in



claiming economic development has been no such reasoned affair as the economists have sometimes made it out to be ; at the same time the economists are right to insist on the rational element in men's economic conduct at present, for they have grown more and more rational with the accumulation of culture.

As we have seen, men had to learn to desire goods, to value goods in terms of other goods, to trade and to trust one another in trading. Their present degree of economic rationality is an outgrowth of all their experiences from their first appearance on the earth ; but in particular it is an outgrowth of the development of cultures and the spread of social contacts from the time of the rise of civilization in Egypt and Asia. Above all, however, it has been during the last hundred and fifty years that wide social contacts, intensive and extensive, have been established. Men's general economic reasoning has made tremendous advances since the Industrial Revolution.

*The Attainment of Experience through Economic Rationality*

The wide contacts of the last hundred and fifty years and more have been something other than a cause of economic rationality, however. They have also been an effect of it. As the advantages of commercial and industrial development were learned through contacts, so by commercial and industrial development these contacts are themselves increased. Previous to the Industrial Revolution the pursuit of wealth in itself was not usually much of an adventure. It was secondary to

the other adventures of exploration, conquest, brigandage. At the same time the consumption of wealth was scarcely an adventure at all. This is one good reason why there was no wide-spread stimulation to obtain wealth.

In the old days property had its advantages to be sure, but they were comparatively few. The ancient Croesus, the mediæval lord, could indulge a love of luxuries and display, yet the wealthy, on the whole, were scarcely better off than the poor, by virtue of what wealth itself could bring. Those who tasted life to the full found position a better means thereto than the control of economic goods.

With the Industrial Revolution, however, wealth became distinctively a means of experience itself. On the one hand, the pursuit of wealth became itself an adventure of the first rank. To the captains of soldiers and ships succeeded the captains of commerce and industry. On the other hand, the consumption of wealth afforded a thousand different means for tasting life. After all it took a high degree of courage to overlook the dangers and discomforts involved in seeking experience in the old days. After the Industrial Revolution, however, not only could one fare afield in comparative ease and safety, but a person whose vitality was not great enough to send him forth at all could investigate the new at his own fireside, through the utilities which purchasable articles brought him. When men learned that this was so they turned their attention to economic goods, through which now, for the first time, on a large scale their most fundamental impulse could be in a measure fulfilled. Indeed, the consumption of goods opens

a new avenue for the will to learn. In the experiences purchasable by wealth a man's life may be expanded and enriched in many ways.

But, it will be said, we are overlooking the fact that the economic world is made up chiefly of producers and consumers whose motives are far from "mere" exploration or learning. What most producers want is gain itself, and what most consumers want is to sit back in luxury and let the world go by. In an earlier chapter we have indicated that this often may be so. Things found pleasurable as means become ends in themselves. Production and consumption may be not only education but indulgence.

Herein of course lies the justice of the criticism that this is a crudely materialistic age. It is so. Few producers and consumers are able altogether to resist the hedonic lure. Yet if the urge to experience can introduce a love of pleasure for its own sake, so can pleasure introduce experience. We have spoken, for instance, of the three great and pervading modern complexes, the radio, the motion picture, and the automobile. A large measure of learning is necessitated by the consumption of such utilities as these. They are all, almost in spite of themselves, as it were, effective means for spreading social contacts.

The point does not need to be pressed, however. Even when the production and consumption of economic goods does not contribute directly to the increase of experience it does so indirectly, for the gain spirit necessitates the finding of new natural resources to exploit and new markets to develop. Hence it brings about a greater intensifying of social contacts throughout the earth. Warriors, travellers

and explorers made these contacts in the past, merchants and industrialists make them now, and make them most effectively. Economic motives teach civilization as no other motives have ever done. Culture is carried to lands of scant culture, and the different and incomplete cultures of civilized peoples are enriched by one another. So trade becomes a means for spreading rationality as it is itself spread by it.

*The Economic Interpretation of History*

After all the only way men can obtain the experience on which culture is founded is through contact with the material world that surrounds them. If they have slight interest in the experiences made possible by that material world, culture will proceed very slowly and the acquisition of reason be correspondingly slow also. To be sure, economic expansion and reason do not always nor even generally proceed with equal step. We have had great cultures that were only slightly economic, and the economic cultures of our day recall the misuse that has been made of the advantages they offer. Yet the slightly economic cultures are essentially the cultures of a few outstanding individuals, or a small class of individuals, while in modern economic cultures the whole people have a share.

Our study has shown how incorrect is the economic interpretation of history as it is usually understood. Many motives other than economic ones have directed men's activities, though economic motives, general and special, probably preponderate to-day. Yet in a deeper sense an economic interpretation of history is a true one. It is only

through the use of the material world that man learns to know anything at all ; without this use of the material world his reason would never develop, and the more he uses the material world the wider becomes his basis of knowledge, the more fully he realises his potentialities as a man. That faculty which he begins to develop as a savage through the wilderness that surrounds him, he continues to develop as a civilized man by means of factories and railroads. To investigate every aspect of the material world and to reject it as soon as it is exhausted for education, to use each experience as a step to another and fuller experience, this is how man grows. Thus the economic interpretation of history appears as one side of a process of which the ethical is the other side.



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